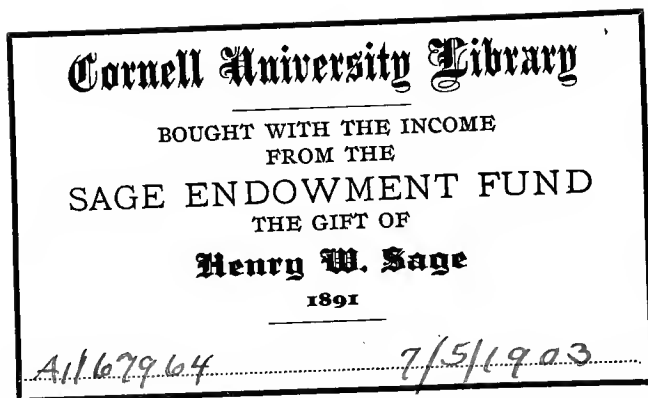


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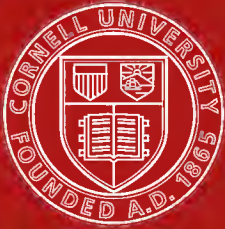
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OF
DANIEL WEBSTER

National Edition

VOLUME TWO

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THE WRITINGS AND
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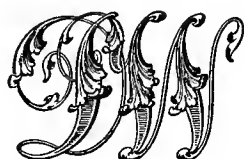
IN EIGHTEEN VOLUMES



VOLUME TWO

The Writings and Speeches of
DANIEL WEBSTER

In Eighteen Volumes · NATIONAL
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TWO · SPEECHES ON
VARIOUS OCCASIONS



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The Election of 1825

VOL. II. — I

Introductory Note

It has already been observed in the Introductory Memoir, that, from the return of peace in 1815, a tendency manifested itself in many parts of the country toward a dissolution of the old parties. The overwrought feelings of the people demanded repose. The subject-matter of several of the points of party dissension had expired with the war. New questions of great public interest, traversing the old party lines, had sprung up. General Jackson, in a letter addressed to Mr. Monroe, in 1817, on the subject of the formation of his cabinet, had advised him to discard the former party divisions. In the progress of his eight years' administration, it was every day more and more apparent, that the old party influences had spent their force. It became at last impossible to recognize their continued existence.

With the approach of the national election in the autumn of 1824, at which four candidates were supported for the office of President, no thoughts were entertained in any quarter of recommending either of them as a candidate to be supported or opposed by one or the other of the ancient parties. If there was any seeming departure from this principle, it must have been to some quite limited extent, and for supposed advantage in narrow localities. In the Union at large, no such attempt was made. The several candidates were sustained on broad national grounds.

This was eminently the case in Massachusetts, where a very large majority of the people, assuming the name of National Republicans, and without reference to former divisions, were united in the support of their fellow-citizen, John Quincy Adams. At the State elections next succeeding his accession to the Presidency, in the spring of 1825, the candidates for the offices of Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, who, at the last contested election, had been brought forward by the Democratic party, were almost unanimously supported, and a union ticket for Senators was nominated in most of the counties of the State. Such was the case in Suffolk County; and at a meeting held in Faneuil Hall, without distinction of party, to ratify these nominations, the following remarks were made by Mr. Webster.

The Election of 1825*

MR. WEBSTER said, he was quite unaccustomed to appear in that place; having on no occasion addressed his fellow-citizens there, either to recommend or to oppose the support of any candidates for public office. He had long been of opinion, that to preserve the distinction and the hostility of political parties was not consistent with the highest degree of public good. At the same time, he did not find fault with the conduct, nor question the motives, of those who thought otherwise. But, entertaining this opinion, he had habitually abstained from attending on those occasions on which the merits of public men, and of candidates for office, were discussed, necessarily with more or less reference to party attachment and party organization.

The present was an occasion of a different kind. The sentiment which had called this meeting together was one of union and conciliation; a sentiment so congenial to his own feelings, and to his opinion of the public interest, that he could not resist the inclination to be present, and to express his entire and hearty concurrence.

He should forbear, he said, from all remarks upon the particular names which had been recommended by the committee. They had been selected, he must presume, fairly, and with due consideration, by those who were appointed for that purpose. In cases of this sort, every one cannot expect to find every thing precisely as he might wish it; but those who concurred in the general sentiment which dictated the selection would naturally allow that sentiment to prevail as far as possible over particular objections.

* Speech delivered at a Meeting of Citizens of Boston, held in Faneuil Hall on the Evening of April 3d, 1825, preparatory to the General Election in Massachusetts.

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On the general question he would make a few remarks, begging the indulgence of the meeting if he should say any thing which might with more propriety proceed from others.

He hardly conceived how well disposed and intelligent minds could differ as to the question, whether party contest and party strife, organized, systematic, and continued, were of themselves desirable ingredients in the composition of society. Difference of opinion on political subjects, honorable competition, and emulous rivalry, may indeed be useful. But these are very different things from organized and systematic party combinations. He admitted, it was true, that party associations were sometimes unavoidable, and perhaps necessary to the accomplishment of other ends and purposes. But this did not prove that, of themselves, they were good; or that they should be continued and preserved for their own sake, when there had ceased to be any object to be effected by them.

But there were those who supposed, that, whether political party distinctions were or were not useful, it was impossible to abolish them. Now he thought, on the contrary, that, under present circumstances, it was quite impossible to continue them. New parties, indeed, might arise, growing out of new events or new questions; but as to those old parties which had sprung from controversies now no longer pending, or from feelings which time and other causes had now changed, or greatly allayed, he did not believe that they could long remain. Efforts, indeed, made to that end, with zeal and perseverance, might delay their extinction, but, he thought, could not prevent it. There was nothing to keep alive these distinctions in the interests and objects which now engaged society. New questions and new objects arise, having no connection with the subjects of past controversies, and present interest overcomes or absorbs the recollection of former controversies. Those who are united on these existing questions and present interests will not be disposed to weaken their efforts to promote them, by angry reflections on past differences. If there were nothing *in things* to divide about, he thought the people not likely to maintain systematic controversies about *men*. They have no interest in so doing. Associations formed to support *principles* may be called *parties*; but if they have no bond of union but adherence to particular *men*, they become *factions*.

The people, in his opinion, were at present grateful to all parties for whatever of good they had accomplished, and indulgent to all for whatever of error they had committed; and, with these feelings, were now mainly intent on the great objects which affected their present interests. There might be exceptions to this remark; he was afraid there were; but, nevertheless, such appeared to him to be the general feeling in the country. It was natural that some prejudices should remain longer than their causes, as the waves lash the shore for a time after the storm has subsided; but the tendency of the elements was to repose. Monopolies of all sorts were getting out of fashion; they were yielding to liberal ideas, and to the obvious justice and expediency of fair competition.

An administration of the general government, which had been in general highly satisfactory to the country, had now closed.* He was not aware that it could with propriety be said, that that administration had been either supported or opposed by any party associations or on any party principles. Certain it was, that, as far as there had been any organized opposition to the administration, it had had nothing to do with former parties. A new administration had now commenced, and he need hardly say that the most liberal and conciliatory principles had been avowed in the Inaugural Address of the newly elected President. It could not be doubted that his administration would conform to those principles. Thus far, he believed, its course had given general satisfaction. After what they all had seen in relation to the gentleman holding the highest appointment in the executive department under the President, he would take this opportunity to say, that, having been a member of the House of Representatives for six years, during the greater part of which time Mr. Clay had presided in that House, he was most happy in being able, in a manner less formal and more explicit than by concurring in the usual vote of thanks, to express his own opinion of his liberality, independence, and honorable feeling. And he would take this occasion also to add, if his opinion could be of any value in such a case, that he thought nothing more unfounded than that that gentleman owed his present situation to any unworthy compromise or arrangement

* That of President Monroe, which commenced on the 4th of March, 1817, and continued for two terms, till the 4th of March, 1825.

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whatever. He owed it to his talent, to his prominent standing in the community, to his course of public service, not now a short one, and to the high estimation in which he stands with that part of the country to which he belongs.

Remarks, Mr. Webster proceeded to say, had been made from the chair, very kind and partial, as to the manner in which he had discharged the duties which he owed to his constituents in the House of Representatives. He wished to say, that if he had been able to render any, the humblest services, either to the public or his constituents, in that place, it was owing wholly to the liberal manner in which his efforts there had been received.

Having alluded to the Inaugural Address, he did not mean in the slightest degree to detract from its merits, when he now said, that, in his opinion, if either of the other candidates had succeeded in the election, he also would have adopted a liberal course of policy. He had no reason to believe that the sentiments of either of those gentlemen were, in this respect, narrow or contracted. He fully believed the contrary, in regard to both of them; but if they had been otherwise, he thought still that expediency or necessity would have controlled their inclinations.

I forbear, said Mr. Webster, from pursuing these remarks farther. I repeat, that I do not complain of those who have hitherto thought, or who still think, that party organization is necessary to the public good. I do not question their motives; and I wish to be tolerant even to those who think that toleration ought not to be indulged.

It is said, Sir, that prosperity sometimes hardens the heart. Perhaps, also, it may sometimes have a contrary effect, and elevate and liberalize the feelings. If this can ever be the result of such a cause, there is certainly in the present condition of the country enough to inspire the most grateful and the kindest feelings. We have a common stock both of happiness and of distinction, of which we are all entitled, as citizens of the country, to partake. We may all rejoice in the general prosperity, in the peace and security which we enjoy, and in the brilliant success which has thus far attended our republican institutions. These are circumstances which may well excite in us all a noble pride. Our civil and political institutions, while they answer for us all the great ends designed by them, furnish at the same time an example to others, and diffuse blessings beyond our own limits.

In whatever part of the globe men are found contending for political liberty, they look to the United States with a feeling of brotherhood, and put forth a claim of kindred. The South American states, especially, exhibit a most interesting spectacle. Let the great men who formed our constitutions of government, who still survive, and let the children of those who have gone to their graves, console themselves with the reflection, that, whether they have risen or fallen in the little contests of party, they have not only established the liberty and happiness of their own native land, but have conferred blessings beyond their own country, and beyond their own thoughts, on millions of men and on successions of generations. Under the influence of these institutions, received and adopted in principle from our example, the whole southern continent has shaken off its colonial subjection. A new world, filled with fresh and interesting nations, has risen to our sight. America seems again discovered; not to geography, but to commerce, to social intercourse, to intelligence, to civilization, and to liberty. Fifty years ago, some of those who now hear me, and the fathers of many others, listened in this place to those mighty leaders, Otis and Adams. When they then uttered the spirit-stirring sounds of Independence and Liberty, there was not a foot of land on the continent, inhabited by civilized man, that did not acknowledge the dominion of European power. Thank God, at this moment, from this place to the south pole, and from sea to sea, there is hardly a foot of land that does.

And, Sir, when these states, thus newly disenthralled and emancipated, assume the tone and bear the port of independence, what language and what ideas do we find associated with their newly acquired liberty? They speak, Sir, of constitutions, of declarations of rights, of the liberty of the press, of a congress, and of representative government. Where, Sir, did they learn these? And when they have applied to their great leader, and the founder of their states, the language of praise and commendation till they have exhausted it, when unsatisfied gratitude can express itself no otherwise, do they not call him their WASHINGTON? Sir, the Spirit of Continental Independence, the Genius of American Liberty, which in earlier times tried her infant voice in the halls and on the hills of New England, utters it now, with power that seems to wake the dead, on the plains of Mexico, and along the sides of the Andes.

‘ Her path, where’er the goddess roves,
Glory pursues, and generous shame,
The unconquerable mind, and Freedom’s holy flame.’”

There is one other point of view, Sir, in regard to which I will say a few words, though perhaps at some hazard of misinterpretation.

In the wonderful spirit of improvement and enterprise which animates the country, we may be assured that each quarter will naturally exert its power in favor of objects in which it is interested. This is natural and unavoidable. Each portion, therefore, will use its best means. If the West feels a strong interest in clearing the navigation of its mighty streams, and opening roads through its vast forests, if the South is equally zealous to push the production and augment the prices of its great staples, it is reasonable to expect that these objects will be pursued by the best means which offer themselves. And it may therefore well deserve consideration, whether the commercial and navigating and manufacturing interests of the North do not call on us to aid and support them, by united counsels and united efforts. But I abstain from enlarging on this topic. Let me rather say, that in regard to the whole country a new era has arisen. In a time of peace, the proper pursuits of peace engage society with a degree of enterprise and an intenseness of application heretofore unknown. New objects are opening, and new resources developed, on every side. We tread on a broader theatre; and if, instead of acting our parts according to the novelty and importance of the scene, we waste our strength in mutual crimination and recrimination concerning the past, we shall resemble those navigators, who, having escaped from some crooked and narrow river to the sea, now that the whole ocean is before them, should, nevertheless, occupy themselves with the differences which happened as they passed along among the rocks and the shallows, instead of opening their eyes to the wide horizon around them, spreading their sail to the propitious gale that woos it, raising their quadrant to the sun, and grasping the helm with the conscious hand of a master.

Dinner at Faneuil Hall

Dinner at Faneuil Hall

AT a public dinner given him on the 5th of June, 1828, by the citizens of Boston (Hon. T. H. Perkins in the chair), as a mark of respect for his services as Senator of the United States, and late their Representative in Congress, after the annunciation of the following toast, "Our distinguished guest,—worthy the noblest homage which freemen can give or a freeman receive, the homage of their hearts," Mr. Webster rose and spoke as follows : —

MR. CHAIRMAN, — The honor conferred by this occasion, as well as the manner in which the meeting has been pleased to receive the toast which has now been proposed to them from the chair, requires from me a most respectful acknowledgment and a few words of honest and sincere thanks. I should, indeed, be lost to all just feeling, or guilty of a weak and puerile affectation, if I should fail to manifest the emotions which are excited by these testimonials of regard, from those among whom I live, who see me oftenest, and know me best. If the approbation of good men be an object fit to be pursued, it is fit to be enjoyed ; if it be, as it doubtless is, one of the most stirring and invigorating motives which operate upon the mind, it is also among the richest rewards which console and gratify the heart.

I confess myself particularly touched and affected, Mr. President and Gentlemen, by the kind feeling which you manifest towards me as your fellow-citizen, your neighbor, and your friend. Respect and confidence, in these relations of life, lie at the foundation of all valuable character ; they are as essential to solid and permanent reputation as to durable and social happiness. I assure you, Sir, with the utmost sincerity, that there is nothing which could flow from human approbation and applause, no distinction, however high or alluring, no object of

ambition, which could possibly be brought within the horizon of my view, that would tempt me, in any degree, justly to forfeit the attachment of my private friends, or surrender my hold, as a citizen and a neighbor, on the confidence of the community in which I live; a community to which I owe so much, in the bosom of which I have enjoyed so much, and where I still hope to remain, in the interchange of mutual good wishes and the exercise of mutual good offices, for the residue of life.

The commendation bestowed by the meeting upon my attempts at public service, I am conscious, is measured rather by their own kindness, than by any other standard. Of those attempts, no one can think more humbly than I do. The affairs of the general government, foreign and domestic, are vast and various and complicated. They require from those who would aspire to take a leading part in them an amount, a variety, and an accuracy of information, which, even if the adequate capacity were not wanting, are not easily attained by one whose attention is of necessity mainly devoted to the duties of an active and laborious profession. For this as well as many other reasons, I am conscious of having discharged my public duties in a manner no way entitling them to the degree of favor which has now been manifested.

And this manifestation of favor and regard is the more especially to be referred to the candor and kindness of the meeting, on this occasion, since it is well known, that in a recent instance, and in regard to an important measure, I have felt it my duty to give a vote, in respect to the expediency and propriety of which considerable difference of opinion exists between persons equally entitled to my regard and confidence.* The candid interpretation which has been given to that vote by those who disapproved it, and the assembling together here, for the purposes of this occasion, of those who felt pain, as well as those who felt pleasure, at the success of the measure for which the vote was given, afford ample proof, how far unsuspected uprightness of intention and the exercise of an independent judgment may be

* The subject referred to is the tariff law of 1828. For a fuller statement of the considerations which influenced the vote of Mr. Webster on that subject, see his speech, in a subsequent volume of this collection, delivered in the Senate of the United States on the 9th of May, 1828.

respected, even by those who differ from the results to which that exercise of judgment has arrived. There is no class of the community for whose interests I have ever cherished a more sincere regard, than that on whose pursuits some parts of the measure alluded to bear with great severity. They are satisfied, I hope, that, in supporting a measure in any degree injurious to them, I must have been governed by other paramount reasons, satisfactory to my own conscience; and that the blow inflicted on their interests was felt by me almost as painfully and heavily as it could be by those on whom it immediately fell. I am not now about to enter into the reason of that vote, or to explain the necessity under which I found myself placed, by a most strange and unprecedented manner of legislation, of taking the evil of a public measure for the sake of its good; the good and the bad provisions relating to different subjects, having not the slightest connection with each other, yet yoked together, and kept together, for reasons and purposes which I need not state, as they have been boldly avowed, and are now before the public.

It was my misfortune, Sir, on that occasion, to differ from my most estimable and worthy colleague;* and yet probably our difference was not so broad as it might seem. We both saw in the measure something to approve, and something to disapprove. If it could have been left to us to mould and to frame it according to our opinions of what the good of the country required, there would have been no diversity of judgment between us, as to what should have been retained and what rejected. The only difference was, when the measure had assumed its final shape, whether the good it contained so far preponderated over its acknowledged evil, as to justify the reception and support of the whole together. On a point of this sort, and under circumstances such as those in which we were placed, it is not strange that different minds should incline different ways. It gives me great pleasure to bear testimony to the constancy, the intelligence, and the conscious fidelity with which my colleague discharged his public duty in reference to this subject. I am happy also to have the opportunity of saying, that, if the bill had been presented to me in the form it was when it received a negative

* Hon. Nathaniel Silsbee.

vote from the distinguished gentleman* who represents this Congressional District, my own opinion of it would have entirely concurred with his, and I should have voted in the same manner.

The meeting will indulge me with one further remark, before parting from this subject. It is only the suggestion, that in the place I occupied I was one of the representatives of the whole Commonwealth. I was not at liberty to look exclusively to the interests of the district in which I live, and which I have heretofore had the high honor of representing. I was to extend my view from Barnstable to Berkshire; to comprehend in it a proper regard for all interests, and a proper respect for all opinions. Looking to the aggregate of all the interests of the Commonwealth, and regarding the general current of opinion, so far as that was properly to be respected, I saw, at least I thought I saw, my duty to lie in the path which I pursued. The measure is adopted. Its consequences, for good or evil, must be left to the results of experience. In the mean time, I refer the propriety of the vote which I gave, with entire submission, and with the utmost cheerfulness also, to the judgment of the good people of the Commonwealth.

On some other subjects, Mr. President, I had the good fortune to act in perfect unison with my colleague, and with every representative of the State. On one, especially, the success of which, I am sure, must have gratified every one who hears me. I could not, Sir, have met this assembly, I could not have raised my voice in Faneuil Hall, — you would have awed me down; if you had not, the portraits of patriots which adorn these walls would have frowned me into silence, — if I had refused either my vote or my voice to the cause of the officers and soldiers of the Revolutionary army. That measure, mixed up of justice, and charity, and mercy, is at last accomplished. The survivors of those who fought our Revolutionary battles, under an engagement to see the contest through, are at length provided for, not sumptuously, not extravagantly, but in a manner to place them, in their old age, beyond the reach of absolute want. Solace, also, has been administered to their feelings, as well as to their necessities. They are not left to count their scars, or to experience the pain of wounds, inflicted half a century ago,

* Hon. Benjamin Gorham.

in their country's service, without some token, that they are yet held in grateful remembrance. A gratifying proof of respect for the services of their youth and manhood quickens the pulsations of patriotism in veteran bosoms; and as they may now live beyond the reach of absolute want, so they will have the pleasure of closing life, when that time for closing it shall come which must come to all, with the happy consciousness of meritorious services, gratefully recompensed.

Another subject, now becoming exceedingly interesting, was, in various forms, presented to Congress at the last session; and in regard to which, I believe, there is, substantially, a general union of opinion among the members from this Commonwealth; I mean what is commonly called Internal Improvements. The great and growing importance of this subject may, I hope, justify a few remarks relative to it on the present occasion.

It was evident to all persons of much observation, at the close of the late war, that the condition and prospects of the United States had become essentially changed, in regard to sundry great interests of the country. Almost from the formation of the government, till near the commencement of that war, the United States had occupied a position of singular and extraordinary advantage. They had been at peace, while the powers of Europe had been at war. The harvest of neutrality had been to them rich and ample; and they had reaped it with skill and diligence. Their agriculture and commerce had both sensibly felt the benefit arising from the existing state of the world. Bread was raised for those whose hands were otherwise employed than in the cultivation of the field, and the seas were navigated, for account of such as, being belligerents, could not safely navigate them for themselves. These opportunities for useful employment were all seized and enjoyed, by the enterprise of the country; and a high degree of prosperity was the natural result.

But with general peace a new state of things arose. The European states at once turned their own attention to the pursuits proper for their new situation, and sought to extend their own agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial interests. It was evident, that thenceforward, instead of our enjoying the advantages peculiar to neutrality in times of war a general competition would spring up, and nothing was to be expected without a struggle. Other nations would now raise their own bread,

and as far as possible transport their own commodities; and the export trade and the carrying trade of this country were, therefore, certain to become the subjects of new and powerful competition, if not to receive sudden and violent checks. It seemed reasonable, therefore, in this state of things, to turn our thoughts inwards; to search out the hitherto unexplored resources of our own country; to find, if we could, new diversifications of industry and new subjects for the application of labor at home. It was fit to consider how far home productions could properly be made to furnish activity to home supply; and since the country stretched over so many parallels of latitude and longitude, abounding, of course, in the natural productions proper to each, it was of the highest importance to inquire what means existed of establishing free and cheap intercourse between those distant parts, thereby bringing the raw material, abounding in one, under the action of the productive labor which was found in another. Roads and canals, therefore, were seen to be of the first consequence. And then the interesting question arose, how far it was constitutionally lawful, and how far expedient, for the general government to give aid and succor to the business of making roads and canals, in conjunction with the enterprise of individuals or of states. I am among those who have held the opinion, that, if any object of that kind be of general and national importance, it is within the scope of the powers of the government; though I admit it to be a power which should be exercised with very great care and discretion. Congress has power to *regulate* commerce, both internal and external; and whatever might have been thought to be the literal interpretation of these terms, we know the construction to have been, from the very first assembling of Congress, and by the very men who framed the Constitution, that the regulation of commerce comprehended such measures as were necessary for its support, its improvement, its advancement, and justified the expenditure of money for such purposes as the construction of piers, beacons, and light-houses, and the clearing out of harbors. Instances of this sort, in the application of the general revenues, have been frequent, from the commencement of the government. As the same power, precisely, exists in relation to internal as to external trade, it was not easy to see why like expenditures might not be justified, when made on internal objects. The

vast regions of the West are penetrated by rivers, to which those of Europe are but as rills and brooks. But the navigation of these noble streams, washing, as they do, the margin of one third of the States of the Union, is obstructed by obstacles, capable of being removed, and yet not likely to be removed, but by the power of the general government. Was this a justifiable object of expenditure from the national treasury? Without hesitation, I have thought it was. A vast chain of lakes, if it be not more proper to call them a succession of inland seas, stretches into the deep interior of this northern part of the continent, as if kindly placed there by Providence to break the continuity of the land, and afford the easier and readier intercourse of water conveyance. But these vast lakes required, also, harbors, and light-houses, and breakwaters. And were these lawful objects of national legislation? To me, certainly, they have appeared to be such, as clearly as if they were on the Atlantic border.

In most of the new States of the West, the United States are yet proprietors of vast bodies of land. Through some of these States, and sometimes through these same public lands, the local authorities have prepared to carry expensive canals, for the general benefit of the country. Some of these undertakings have been attended with great expense, and have subjected the States, whose enterprising spirit has begun and carried them on, to large debts and heavy taxation. The lands of the United States, being exempted from all taxation, of course bear no part of this burden. Looking to the United States, therefore, as a great landed proprietor, essentially benefited by these improvements, I have felt no difficulty in voting for the appropriation of parts of these lands, as a reasonable contribution by the United States to these general objects.

Most of the subjects to which I have referred are much less local, in their influence and importance, than they might seem. The breakwater in the Delaware, useful to Philadelphia, is useful also to all the ship-owners in the United States, and indeed to all interested in commerce, especially that great branch, the coastwise commerce. If the mouths of the Southern rivers be deepened and improved, the neighboring cities are benefited, but so also are the ships which visit them; and if the Mississippi and Ohio be rendered more safe for navigation, the great markets of consumption along their shores are the more readily and

cheaply approached by the products of the factories and fisheries of New England.

It is my opinion, Mr. President, that the present government of the United States cannot be maintained but by administering it on principles as wide and broad as the country over which it extends. I mean, of course, no extension of the powers which it confers; but I speak of the spirit with which those powers should be exercised. If there be any doubts, whether so many republics, covering so vast a territory, can be long held together under this Constitution, there is no doubt in my judgment of the impossibility of so holding them together by any narrow, local, or selfish system of legislation. To render the Constitution perpetual (which God grant it may be), it is necessary that its benefits should be practically felt by all parts of the country, and all interests in the country. The East and the West, the North and the South, must all see their own welfare protected and advanced by it. While the eastern frontier is defended by fortifications, its harbors improved, and commerce protected by a naval force, it is right and just that the region beyond the Alleghanies should receive fair consideration and equal attention, in any object of public improvement, interesting to itself, and within the proper power of the government. These, Sir, are in brief the general views by which I have been governed on questions of this kind; and I trust they are such as this meeting does not disapprove.

I would not trespass further upon your attention, if I did not feel it my duty to say a few words on the condition of public affairs under another aspect. We are on the eve of a new election of President; and the manner in which the existing administration is attacked might lead a stranger to suppose that the chief magistrate had committed some flagrant offence against the country, had threatened to overturn its liberties, or establish a military usurpation. On a former occasion I have in this place expressed my opinion of the principle upon which the opposition to the administration is founded, without any reference whatever to the person who stands as its apparent head, and who is intended by it to be placed in the chief executive chair. I think that principle exceedingly dangerous and alarming, inasmuch as it does not profess to found opposition to the government on the measures of government, but to rest it on

other causes, and those mostly personal. There is a combination or association of persons holding the most opposite opinions, both on the constitutional powers of the government and on the leading measures of public concern, and uniting in little, or in nothing, except the will to dislodge power from the hands in which the country has placed it. There has been no leading measure of the government, with perhaps a single exception, which has not been strenuously maintained by many, or by some, of those who all coöperate, nevertheless, in pursuit of the object which I have mentioned. This is but one of many proofs that the opposition does not rest on the principle of disapprobation of the measures of government. Many other evidences of the same truth might be adduced easily. A remarkable one is, that, while one ground of objection to the administration is urged in one place, its precise opposite is pressed in another. Pennsylvania and South Carolina, for example, are not treated with the same reasons for a change of administration; but with flatly contradictory reasons. In one, the administration is represented as bent on a particular system oppressive to that State, and which must ultimately ruin it; and for that reason there ought to be a change. In the other, that system, instead of being ruinous, is represented as salutary, as necessary, as indispensable. But the administration is declared to be but half in earnest in supporting it, and for that reason there ought to be a change.

Reflecting men have always supposed, that, if there were a weak point in the Federal Constitution, it was in the provision for the exercise of the executive power. And this, perhaps, may be considered as rendered more delicate and difficult, by the great augmentation of the number of the States. We must expect that there will often be, as there was on the last election, several candidates for the Presidency. All but one, of course, must be disappointed; and if the friends of all such, however otherwise divided, are immediately to unite, and to make common cause against him who is elected, little is ever to be expected but embarrassment and confusion. The love of office will ere long triumph over the love of country, and party and faction usurp the place of wisdom and patriotism. If the contest for the executive power is thus to be renewed every four years; if it is to be conducted as the present has been conducted; and

if every election is to be immediately followed, as the last was followed, by a prompt union of all whose friends are not chosen against him who is, there is, in my judgment, danger, much danger, that this great experiment of confederated government may fail, and that even those of us who are not among the youngest may behold its catastrophe.

It cannot have escaped the notice of any gentleman present, that, in the course of the controversy, pains have been taken to affect the character and the success of the present chief magistrate, by exciting odium towards that part of the country in which he was born and to which he belongs. Sneers, contumely, reproach, every thing that gentlemen could say, and many things which gentlemen could not say, have been uttered against New England. I am sure, Sir, every true son of New England must receive such things, when they come from sources which ought to be considered respectable, with a feeling of just indignation; and when proceeding from elsewhere, with contempt. If there be one among ourselves who can be induced, by any motives, to join in this cry against New England, he disgraces the New England mother who bore him, the New England father who bred and nurtured him, and the New England atmosphere which first supplied respiration to those lungs, now so unworthily employed in uttering calumnies against his country. Persons not known till yesterday, and having little chance of being remembered beyond to-morrow, have affected to draw a distinction between the patriot States and the States of New England; assigning the last to the present President, and the rest to his rival. I do not wonder, Sir, at the indignation and scorn which I perceive the recital of this injustice produces here. Nothing else was to be expected. Faneuil Hall is not a place where one is expected to hear with indifference that New England is not to be counted among the patriot States. The patriot States! What State was it, Sir, that was patriotic when patriotism cost something? Where but in New England did the great drama of the Revolution open? Where, but on the soil of Massachusetts, was the first blood poured out in the cause of liberty and independence? Where, sooner than here, where earlier than within the walls which now surround us, was patriotism found, when to be patriotic was to endanger houses and homes, and wives and children, and to be ready also to pay

for the reputation of patriotism by the sacrifice of blood and of life?

Not farther to refer to her Revolutionary merits, it may be truly said that New England did her part, and more than her part, in the establishment of the present government, and in giving effect to the measures and the policy of the first President. Where, Sir, did the measures of Washington find the most active friends and the firmest support? Where are the general principles of his policy most widely spread, and most deeply seated? If, in subsequent periods, different opinions have been held by different portions of her people, New England has nevertheless, been always obedient to the laws, even when she most severely felt their pressure, and most conscientiously doubted or disbelieved their propriety. Every great and permanent institution of the country, intended for defence or for improvement, has met her support. And if we look to recent measures, on subjects highly interesting to the community, and especially some portions of it, we see proofs of the same steady and liberal policy. It may be said with entire truth, and it ought to be said, and ought to be known, that no one measure for internal improvement has been carried through Congress, or could have been carried, but by the aid of New England votes. It is for those most deeply interested in subjects of that sort to consider in season, how far the continuance of the same aid is necessary for the further prosecution of the same objects. From the interference of the general government in making roads and canals, New England has as little to hope or expect as any part of the country. She has hitherto supported them upon principle, and from a sincere disposition to extend the blessings and the beneficence of the government. And, Sir, I confidently believe that those most concerned in the success of these measures feel towards her respect and friendship. They feel that she has acted fairly and liberally, wholly uninfluenced by selfish or sinister motives. Those, therefore, who have seen, or thought they saw, an object to be attained by exciting dislike and odium towards New England, are not likely to find quite so favorable an audience as they have expected. It will not go for quite so much as wished, to the disadvantage of the President, that he is a native of Massachusetts. Nothing is wanting but that we ourselves should entertain a proper feeling on this subject, and

act with a just regard to our own rights and our own duties. If I could collect around me the whole population of New England, or if I could cause my voice to be heard over all her green hills, or along every one of her pleasant streams, in the exercise of true filial affection, I would say to her, in the language of the great master of the maxims of life and conduct,

“ This above all, — to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

Mr. President, — I have delayed you too long. I beg to repeat my thanks for the kindness which has been manifested towards me by my fellow-citizens, and to conclude by reciprocating their good wishes : —

The City of Boston. Prosperity to all her interests, and happiness to all her citizens.

The Boston Mechanics' Institution

The Boston Mechanics' Institution*

I APPEAR before you, Gentlemen, for the performance of a duty which is in so great a degree foreign from my habitual studies and pursuits, that it may be presumptuous in me to hope for a creditable execution of the task. But I have not allowed considerations of this kind to weigh against a strong and ardent desire to signify my approbation of the objects, and my conviction of the utility, of this institution; and to manifest my prompt attention to whatever others may suppose to be in my power to promote its respectability and to further its designs.

The constitution of the association declares its precise object to be, "Mutual Instruction in the Sciences, as connected with the Mechanic Arts."

The distinct purpose is to connect science more and more with art; to teach the established, and invent new, modes of combining skill with strength; to bring the power of the human understanding in aid of the physical powers of the human frame; to facilitate the coöperation of the mind with the hand; to promote convenience, lighten labor, and mitigate toil, by stretching the dominion of mind farther and farther over the elements of nature, and by making those elements themselves submit to human rule, follow human bidding, and work together for human happiness.

The visible and tangible creation into which we are introduced at our birth, is not, in all its parts, fixed and stationary. Motion or change of place, regular or occasional, belongs to all or most of the things which are around us. Animal life every-

* Introductory Lecture, read at the Opening of the Course for the Season on the 12th of November, 1828.

where moves; the earth itself has its motion, and its complexities of motion; the ocean heaves and subsides; rivers run, lingering or rushing, to the sea; and the air which we breathe moves and acts with mighty power. Motion, thus pertaining to the physical objects which surround us, is the exhaustless fountain whence philosophy draws the means by which, in various degrees and endless forms, natural agencies and the tendencies of inert matter are brought to the succor and assistance of human strength. It is the object of mechanical contrivance to modify motion, to produce it in new forms, to direct it to new purposes, to multiply its uses, by its means to do better than which human strength could do without its aid, and to perform that, also, which such strength, unassisted by art, could not perform.

Motion itself is but the result of force; or, in other words, force is defined to be whatever tends to produce motion. The operation of forces, therefore, on bodies, is the broad field which is open for that philosophical examination, the results of which it is the business of mechanical contrivance to apply. The leading forces or sources of motion are, as is well known, the power of animals, gravity, heat, the winds, and water. There are various others of less power, or of more difficult application. Mechanical philosophy, therefore, may be said to be that science which instructs us in the knowledge of natural moving powers, animate or inanimate; in the manner of modifying those powers, and of increasing the intensity of some of them by artificial means, such as heat and electricity; and in applying the varieties of force and motion, thus derived from natural agencies, to the arts of life. This is the object of mechanical philosophy. None can doubt, certainly, the high importance of this sort of knowledge, or fail to see how suitable it is to the elevated rank and the dignity of reasoning beings. Man's grand distinction is his intellect, his mental capacity. It is this which renders him highly and peculiarly responsible to his Creator. It is on account of this, that the rule over other animals is established in his hands; and it is this, mainly, which enables him to exercise dominion over the powers of nature, and to subdue them to himself.

But it is true, also, that his own animal organization gives him superiority, and is among the most wonderful of the works of God on earth. It contributes to cause, as well as prove, his

elevated rank in creation. His port is erect, his face toward heaven, and he is furnished with limbs which are not absolutely necessary to his support or locomotion, and which are at once powerful, flexible, capable of innumerable modes and varieties of action, and terminated by an instrument of wonderful, heavenly workmanship, — the human hand. This marvellous physical conformation gives man the power of acting with great effect upon external objects, in pursuance of the suggestions of his understanding, and of applying the results of his reasoning power to his own purposes. Without this particular formation, he would not be man, with whatever sagacity he might have been endowed. No bounteous grant of intellect, were it the pleasure of Heaven to make such grant, could raise any of the brute creation to an equality with the human race. Were it bestowed on the leviathan, he must remain, nevertheless, in the element where alone he could maintain his physical existence. He would still be but the inelegant, misshapen inhabitant of the ocean, "wallowing unwieldy, enormous in his gait." Were the elephant made to possess it, it would but teach him the deformity of his own structure, the unsightliness of his frame, though "the hugest of things," his disability to act on external matter, and the degrading nature of his own physical wants, which lead him to the deserts, and give him for his favorite home the torrid plains of the tropics. It was placing the king of Babylon sufficiently out of the rank of human beings, though he carried all his reasoning faculties with him, when he was sent away to eat grass like an ox. And this may properly suggest to our consideration, what is undeniably true, that there is hardly a greater blessing conferred on man than his natural wants. If he had wanted no more than the beasts, who can say how much more than they he would have attained? Does he associate, does he cultivate, does he build, does he navigate? The original impulse to all these lies in his wants. It proceeds from the necessities of his condition, and from the efforts of unsatisfied desire. Every want, not of a low kind, physical as well as moral, which the human breast feels, and which brutes do not feel and cannot feel, raises man by so much in the scale of existence, and is a clear proof and a direct instance of the favor of God towards his so much favored human offspring. If man had been so made as to desire nothing, he would have wanted almost every thing worth possessing.

But doubtless the reasoning faculty, the mind, is the leading and characteristic attribute of the human race. By the exercise of this, man arrives at the knowledge of the properties of natural bodies. This is science, properly and emphatically so called. It is the science of pure mathematics; and in the high branches of this science lies the true sublime of human acquisition. If any attainment deserve that epithet, it is the knowledge, which, from the mensuration of the minutest dust of the balance, proceeds on the rising scale of material bodies, everywhere weighing, everywhere measuring, everywhere detecting and explaining the laws of force and motion, penetrating into the secret principles which hold the universe of God together, and balancing world against world, and system against system. When we seek to accompany those who pursue studies at once so high, so vast, and so exact; when we arrive at the discoveries of Newton, which pour in day on the works of God, as if a second *fiat* for light had gone forth from his own mouth; when, further, we attempt to follow those who set out where Newton paused, making his goal their starting-place, and, proceeding with demonstration upon demonstration, and discovery upon discovery, bring new worlds and new systems of worlds within the limits of the known universe, failing to learn all only because all is infinite; however we say of man, in admiration of his physical structure, that "in form and moving he is express and admirable," it is here, and here without irreverence, we may exclaim, "In apprehension how like a god!" The study of the pure mathematics will of course not be extensively pursued in an institution, which, like this, has a direct practical tendency and aim. But it is still to be remembered, that pure mathematics lie at the foundation of mechanical philosophy, and that it is ignorance only which can speak or think of that sublime science as useless research or barren speculation.

It has already been said, that the general and well-known agents usually regarded as the principal sources of mechanical powers are gravity, acting on solid bodies, the fall of water, which is but gravity acting on fluids, air, heat, and animal strength. For the useful direction and application of the first four of these, that is, of all of them which belong to inanimate nature, some intermediate apparatus or contrivance becomes necessary; and this apparatus, whatever its form, is a machine. A machine is an invention for the application of motion, either

by changing the direction of the moving power, or by rendering a body in motion capable of communicating a motion greater or less than its own to other bodies, or by enabling it to overcome a power of greater intensity or force than its own. And it is usually said that every machine, however apparently complex, is capable of being resolved into some one or more of those single machines, of which, according to one mode of description, there are six, and according to another, three, called the mechanical powers. But because machinery, or all mechanical contrivance, is thus capable of resolution into a few elementary forms, it is not to be inferred that science, or art, or both together, though pressed with the utmost force of human genius, and cultivated by the last degree of human assiduity, will ever exhaust the combinations into which these elementary forms may be thrown. An indefinite, though not an infinite, reach of invention may be expected; but indefinite, also, if not infinite, are the possible combinations of elementary principles. The field, then, is vast and unbounded. We know not to what yet unthought of heights the power of man over the agencies of nature may be carried. We only know that the last half-century has witnessed an amazingly accelerated progress in useful discoveries, and that, at the present moment, science and art are acting together with a new companionship, and with the most happy and striking results. The history of mechanical philosophy is, of itself, a very interesting subject, and will doubtless be treated in this place fully and methodically, by stated lecturers.

It is a part of the history of man, which, like that of his domestic habits and daily occupations, has been too seldom the subject of research; having been thrust aside by the more dazzling topics of war and political revolutions. We are not often conducted by historians within the houses or huts of our ancestors, as they were centuries ago, and made acquainted with their domestic utensils and domestic arrangements. We see too little both of the conveniences and inconveniences of their daily and ordinary life. There are, indeed, rich materials for interesting details on these particulars to be collected from the labors of Goguet and Beckmann, Henry and Turner; but still, a thorough and well-written history of those inventions in the mechanic arts which are now commonly known is a *desideratum* in literature.

Human sagacity, stimulated by human wants, seizes first on the nearest natural assistant. The power of his own arm is an early lesson among the studies of primitive man. This is animal strength; and from this he rises to the conception of employing, for his own use, the strength of other animals. A stone, impelled by the power of his arm, he finds will produce a greater effect than the arm itself; this is a species of mechanical power. The effect results from a combination of the moving force with the gravity of a heavy body. The limb of a tree is a rude, but powerful instrument; it is a lever. And the mechanical powers being all discovered, like other natural qualities, by induction (I use the word as Bacon used it) or experience, and not by any reasoning *a priori*, their progress has kept pace with the general civilization and education of nations. The history of mechanical philosophy, while it strongly illustrates in its general results the force of the human mind, exhibits in its details most interesting pictures of ingenuity struggling with the conception of new combinations, and of deep, intense, and powerful thought, stretched to its utmost to find out or deduce the general principle from the indications of particular facts. We are now so far advanced beyond the age when the principal leading, important mathematical discoveries were made, and they have become so much matter of common knowledge, that it is not easy to feel their importance, or be justly sensible what an epoch in the history of science each constituted. The half-frantic exultation of Archimedes, when he had solved the problem respecting the crown of Hiero, was on an occasion and for a cause certainly well allowing very high joy. And so also was the duplication of the cube.

The altar of Apollo, at Athens, was a square block, or cube, and to double it, required the duplication of the cube. This was a process involving an unascertained mathematical principle. It was quite natural, therefore, that it should be a traditional story, that, by way of atoning for some affront to that god, the oracle commanded the Athenians to *double his altar*; an injunction, we know, which occupied the keen sagacity of the Greek geometers for more than half a century, before they were able to obey it. It is to the great honor, however, of this inimitable people, the Greeks, a people whose genius seems to have been equally fitted for the investigations of science and

the works of imagination, that the immortal Euclid, centuries before our era, composed his *Elements of Geometry*; a work which, for two thousand years, has been, and still continues to be, a text-book for instruction in that science.

A history of mechanical philosophy, however, would not begin with Greece. There is a wonder beyond Greece. Higher up in the annals of mankind, nearer, far nearer, to the origin of our race, out of all reach of letters, beyond the sources of tradition, beyond all history, except what remains in the monuments of her own art, stands Egypt, the mother of nations! Egypt! Thebes! the Labyrinth! the Pyramids! Who shall explain the mysteries which these names suggest? The Pyramids! Who can inform us whether it was by mere numbers, and patience, and labor, aided perhaps by the simple lever, or if not, by what forgotten combination of powers, by what now unknown machines, mass was thus aggregated to mass, and quarry piled on quarry, till solid granite seemed to cover the earth and reach the skies?

The ancients discovered many things, but they left many things also to be discovered; and this, as a general truth, is what our posterity a thousand years hence will be able to say, doubtless, when we and our generation shall be recorded also among the ancients. For, indeed, God seems to have proposed his material universe as a standing, perpetual study to his intelligent creatures; where, ever learning, they can yet never learn all; and if that material universe shall last till man shall have discovered all that is now unknown, but which by the progressive improvement of his faculties he is capable of knowing, it will remain through a duration beyond human measurement, and beyond human comprehension.

The ancients knew nothing of our present system of arithmetical notation; nothing of algebra, and, of course, nothing of the important application of algebra to geometry. They had not learned the use of logarithms, and were ignorant of fluxions. They had not attained to any just mode for the mensuration of the earth; a matter of great moment to astronomy, navigation, and other branches of useful knowledge. It is scarcely necessary to add, that they were ignorant of the great results which have followed the development of the principle of gravitation.

In the useful and practical arts, many inventions and contri-

vances, to the production of which the degree of knowledge possessed by the ancients would appear to us to have been adequate, and which seem quite obvious, are yet of late origin. The application of water, for example, to turn a mill, is a thing not known to have been accomplished at all in Greece, and is not supposed to have been attempted at Rome till in or near the age of Augustus. The production of the same effect by wind is a still later invention. It dates only in the seventh century of our era. The propulsion of the saw by any other power than that of the arm is treated as a novelty in England, so late as in the middle of the sixteenth century. The Bishop of Ely, at that time ambassador from the queen of England to the Pope, says, "he saw, at Lyons, a sawmill driven with an upright wheel, and the water that maketh it go is gathered whole into a narrow trough, which delivereth the same water to the wheels. This wheel hath a piece of timber put to the axletree end, like the handle of a *brock* (a hand-organ), and fastened to the end of the saw, which being turned with the force of water, hoisteth up and down the saw, that it continually eateth in, and the handle of the same is kept in a rigall of wood, from swerving. Also the timber lieth, as it were, upon a ladder, which is brought by little and little to the saw with another vice."* From this description of the primitive power-saw, it would seem that it was probably fast only at one end, and that the *brock* and rigall performed the part of the arm in the common use of the handsaw.

It must always have been a very considerable object for men to possess or obtain the power of raising water otherwise than by mere manual labor. Yet nothing like the common suction-pump has been found among rude nations. It has arrived at its present state only by slow and cautious steps of improvement; and, indeed, in that present state, however obvious and unattractive, it is something of an abstruse and refined invention. It was unknown in China, until Europeans visited the "Celestial Empire"; and is still unknown in other parts of Asia, beyond the pale of European settlements or the reach of European communication. The Greeks and Romans are supposed to have been ignorant of it, in the early times of their history; and it is usually said to have come from Alexandria,

* See Beckmann's *Inventions*, Vol. I. p. 373, where the passage is quoted from the *Miscellaneous State Papers*.

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where physical science was much cultivated by the Greek philosophers, under the patronage of the Ptolemies.

These few and scattered historical notices, Gentlemen, of important inventions, have been introduced only for the purpose of suggesting that there is much which is both curious and instructive in the history of mechanics; and that many things which to us, in our state of knowledge, seem so obvious as that we should think they would at once force themselves on men's adoption, have, nevertheless, been accomplished slowly and by painful efforts.

But if the history of the progress of the mechanical arts be interesting, still more so, doubtless, would be the exhibition of their present state, and a full display of the extent to which they are now carried. This field is much too wide to be entered on this occasion. The briefest outline even would exceed its limits; and the whole subject will regularly fall to hands much more able to sustain it. The slightest glance, however, must convince us that mechanical power and mechanical skill, as they are now exhibited in Europe and America, mark an epoch in human history worthy of all admiration. Machinery is made to perform what has formerly been the toil of human hands, to an extent that astonishes the most sanguine, with a degree of power to which no number of human arms is equal, and with such precision and exactness as almost to suggest the notion of reason and intelligence in the machines themselves. Every natural agent is put unrelentingly to the task. The winds work, the waters work, the elasticity of metals works; gravity is solicited into a thousand new forms of action; levers are multiplied upon levers; wheels revolve on the peripheries of other wheels; the saw and the plane are tortured into an accommodation to new uses, and, last of all, with inimitable power, and "with whirlwind sound," comes the potent agency of steam. In comparison with the past, what centuries of improvement has this single agent comprised, in the short compass of fifty years! Everywhere practicable, everywhere efficient, it has an arm a thousand times stronger than that of Hercules, and to which human ingenuity is capable of fitting a thousand times as many hands as belonged to Briareus. Steam is found in triumphant operation on the seas; and under the influence of its strong propulsion, the gallant ship,

“ Against the wind, against the tide,
Still *steadies*, with an upright keel.”

It is on the rivers, and the boatman may repose on his oars ; it is on highways, and begins to exert itself along the courses of land conveyance ; it is at the bottom of mines, a thousand feet below the earth's surface ; it is in the mill, and in the workshops of the trades. It rows, it pumps, it excavates, it carries, it draws, it lifts, it hammers, it spins, it weaves, it prints. It seems to say to men, at least to the class of artisans, “ Leave off your manual labor, give over your bodily toil ; bestow but your skill and reason to the directing of my power, and I will bear the toil,—with no muscle to grow weary, no nerve to relax, no breast to feel faintness.” What further improvements may still be made in the use of this astonishing power, it is impossible to know, and it were vain to conjecture. What we do know is, that it has most essentially altered the face of affairs, and that no visible limit yet appears, beyond which its progress is seen to be impossible. If its power were now to be annihilated, if we were to miss it on the water and in the mills, it would seem as if we were going back to rude ages.

This society, then, Gentlemen, is instituted for the purpose of further and further applying science to the arts, at a time when there is much of science to be applied. Philosophy and the mathematics have attained to high degrees, and still stretch their wings like the eagle. Chemistry, at the same time, acting in another direction, has made equally important discoveries, capable of a direct application to the purposes of life. Here, again, within so short a period as the lives of some of us, almost all that is known has been learned. And while there is this aggregate of science, already vast, but still rapidly increasing, offering itself to the ingenuity of mechanical contrivance, there is a corresponding demand for every work and invention of art, produced by the wants of a rich, an enterprising, and an elegant age. Associations like this, therefore, have materials to work upon, ends to work for, and encouragement to work.

It may not be improper to suggest, that not only are the general circumstances of the age favorable to such institutions as this, but that there seems a high degree of propriety that one or more should be established here, in the metropolis of New England. In no other part of the country is there so great a con-

centration of mechanical operations. Events have given to New England the lead in the great business of domestic manufactures. Her thickened population, her energetic free labor, her abundant falls of water, and various other causes, have led her citizens to engage, with great boldness, in extensive manufactures. The success of their establishments depends, of course, in no small degree, upon the perfection to which machinery may be carried. Improvement in this, therefore, instead of being left to chance or accident, is justly regarded as a fit subject of assiduous study. The attention of our community is also, at the present moment, strongly attracted towards the construction of canals, railways, dry docks, and other important public works. Civil engineering is becoming a profession, offering honorable support and creditable distinction to such as may qualify themselves to discharge its duties. Another interesting fact is before us. New taste and a new excitement are evidently springing up in our vicinity in regard to an art, which, as it unites in a singular degree utility and beauty, affords inviting encouragements to genius and skill. I mean Architecture. Architecture is military, naval, sacred, civil, or domestic. Naval architecture, certainly, is of the highest importance to a commercial and navigating people to say nothing of its intimate and essential connection with the means of national defence. This science should not be regarded as having already reached its utmost perfection. It seems to have been for some time in a course of rapid advancement. The building, the rigging, the navigating of ships, have, within the knowledge of every one, been subjects of great improvement within the last fifteen years. And where, rather than in New England, may still further improvements be looked for? Where is ship-building either a greater business, or pursued with more skill and eagerness?

In civil, sacred, and domestic architecture, present appearances authorize the strongest hopes of improvement. These hopes rest, among other things, on unambiguous indications of the growing prevalence of a just taste. The principles of architecture are founded in nature, or good sense, as much as the principles of epic poetry. This art constitutes a beautiful medium between what belongs to mere fancy and what belongs entirely to the exact sciences. In its forms and modifications it admits of infinite variation, giving broad room for invention and ge-

nus ; while, in its general principles, it is founded on that which long experience and the concurrent judgment of ages have ascertained to be generally pleasing. Certain relations of parts to parts have been satisfactory to all the cultivated generations of men. These relations constitute what is called *proportion*, and this is the great basis of architectural art. This established proportion is not to be *followed* merely because it is ancient, but because its use, and the pleasure which it has been found capable of giving to the mind, through the eye, in ancient times, and modern times, and all civilized times, prove that its principles are well founded and just ; in the same manner that the Iliad is proved, by the consent of all ages, to be a good poem.

Architecture, I have said, is an art that unites in a singular manner the useful and the beautiful. It is not to be inferred from this that every thing in architecture is beautiful, or is to be so esteemed, in exact proportion to its apparent utility. No more is meant, than that nothing which evidently thwarts utility can or ought to be accounted beautiful ; because, in every work of art, the design is to be regarded, and what defeats that design cannot be considered as well done. The French rhetoricians have a maxim, that, in literary composition, "nothing is beautiful which is not true." They do not intend to say, that strict and literal truth is alone beautiful in poetry or oratory ; but they mean, that that which grossly offends against probability is not in good taste in either. The same relation subsists between beauty and utility in architecture as between truth and imagination in poetry. Utility is not to be obviously sacrificed to beauty, in the one case ; truth and probability are not to be outraged for the cause of fiction and fancy, in the other. In the severer styles of architecture, beauty and utility approach so as to be almost identical. Where utility is more especially the main design, the proportions which produce it raise the sense or feeling of beauty, by a sort of reflection or deduction of the mind. It is said that ancient Rome had perhaps no finer specimens of the classic Doric than the sewers which ran under her streets, and which were of course always to be covered from human observation : so true is it, that cultivated taste is always pleased with justness of proportion ; and that design, seen to be accomplished, gives pleasure. The discovery and fast-increasing use of a noble material, found in vast abundance nearer to our

city than the Pentelican quarries to Athens, may well awaken, as they do, new attention to architectural improvement. If this material be not entirely well suited to the elegant Ionic or the rich Corinthian, it is yet fitted, beyond marble, beyond perhaps almost any other material, for the Doric, of which the appropriate character is strength, and for the Gothic, of which the appropriate character is grandeur.

It is not more than justice, perhaps, to our ancestors, to call the Gothic the English classic architecture; for in England, probably, are its most distinguished specimens. As its leading characteristic is grandeur, its main use would seem to be sacred. It had its origin, indeed, in ecclesiastical architecture. Its evident design was to surpass the ancient orders by the size of the structure and its far greater heights; to excite perceptions of beauty by the branching traceries and the gorgeous tabernacles within; and to inspire religious awe and reverence by the lofty pointed arches, the flying buttresses, the spires, and the pinnacles, springing from beneath, and stretching upwards towards the heavens with the prayers of the worshippers. Architectural beauty having always a direct reference to utility, edifices, whether civil or sacred, must of course undergo different changes, in different places, on account of climate, and in different ages, on account of the different states of other arts or different notions of convenience. The hypethral temple, for example, or temple without a roof, is not to be thought of in our latitude; and the use of glass, a thing not now to be dispensed with, is also to be accommodated, as well as it may be, to the architectural structure. These necessary variations, and many more admissible ones, give room for improvements to an indefinite extent, without departing from the principles of true taste. May we not hope, then, to see our own city celebrated as the city of architectural excellence? May we not hope to see our native granite reposing in the ever-during strength of the Doric, or springing up in the grand and lofty Gothic, in forms which beauty and utility, the eye and the judgment, taste and devotion, shall unite to approve and to admire? But while we regard sacred and civil architecture as highly important, let us not forget that other branch, so essential to personal comfort and happiness,—domestic architecture or common house-building. In ancient times, in all governments, and under despotic govern-

ments in all times, the convenience or gratification of the monarch, the government, or the public has been allowed too often to put aside considerations of personal and individual happiness. With us, different ideas happily prevail. With us, it is not the public, or the government, in its corporate character, that is the only object of regard. The public happiness is to be the aggregate of the happiness of individuals. Our system begins with the individual man. It begins with him when he leaves the cradle; and it proposes to instruct him in knowledge and in morals, to prepare him for his state of manhood; on his arrival at that state, to invest him with political rights, to protect him in his property and pursuits, and in his family and social connections; and thus to enable him to enjoy, as an individual moral and rational being, what belongs to a moral and rational being. For the same reason, the arts are to be promoted for their general utility, as they affect the personal happiness and well-being of the individuals who compose the community. It would be adverse to the whole spirit of our system, that we should have gorgeous and expensive public buildings, if individuals were at the same time to live in houses of mud. Our public edifices are to be reared by the surplus of wealth and the savings of labor, after the necessities and comforts of individuals are provided for; and not, like the Pyramids, by the unremitted toil of thousands of half-starved slaves. Domestic architecture, therefore, as connected with individual comfort and happiness, is to hold a first place in the esteem of our artists. Let our citizens have houses cheap, but comfortable; not gaudy, but in good taste; not judged by the portion of earth they cover, but by their symmetry, their fitness for use, and their durability.

Without further reference to particular arts with which the objects of this society have a close connection, it may yet be added, generally, that this is a period of great activity, of industry, of enterprise in the various walks of life. It is a period, too, of growing wealth and increasing prosperity. It is a time when men are fast multiplying, but when means are increasing still faster than men. An auspicious moment, then, it is, full of motive and encouragement, for the vigorous prosecution of those inquiries which have for their object the discovery of farther and farther means of uniting the results of scientific research to the arts and business of life.

Public Dinner at New York

Introductory Note

In February, 1831, several distinguished gentlemen of the city of New York, in behalf of themselves and a large number of other citizens, invited Mr. Webster to a public dinner, as a mark of their respect for the value and success of his efforts, in the preceding session of Congress, in defence of the Constitution of the United States. His speech in reply to Mr. Hayne (contained in a subsequent volume of this collection), which, by that time, had been circulated and read through the country to a greater extent than any speech ever before delivered in Congress, was the particular effort which led to this invitation.

The dinner took place at the City Hotel, on the 10th of March, and was attended by a very large assembly.

Chancellor Kent presided, and, in proposing to the company the health of their guest, made the following remarks : —

“ New England has been long fruitful in great men, the necessary consequence of the admirable discipline of her institutions ; and we are this day honored with the presence of one of those cherished objects of her attachment and pride, who has an undoubted and peculiar title to our regard. It is a plain truth, that he who defends the constitution of his country by his wisdom in council is entitled to share her gratitude with those who protect it by valor in the field. Peace has its victories as well as war. We all recollect a late memorable occasion, when the exalted talents and enlightened patriotism of the gentleman to whom I have alluded were exerted in the support of our national Union and the sound interpretation of its charter.

“ If there be any one political precept preëminent above all others and acknowledged by all, it is that which dictates the absolute necessity of a union of the States under one government, and that government clothed with those attributes and powers with which the existing Constitution has invested it. We are indebted, under Providence, to the operation and influence of the powers of that Constitution for our national honor abroad and for unexampled prosperity at home. Its future stability depends upon the firm support and due exercise of its legitimate powers in all their branches. A tendency to disunion, to anarchy among the members rather than to tyranny in the head, has been heretofore the melan-

choly fate of all the federal governments of ancient and modern Europe. Our Union and national Constitution were formed, as we have hitherto been led to believe, under better auspices and with improved wisdom. But there was a deadly principle of disease inherent in the system. The assumption by any member of the Union of the right to question and resist, or annul, as its own judgment should dictate, either the laws of Congress, or the treaties, or the decisions of the federal courts, or the mandates of the executive power, duly made and promulgated as the Constitution prescribes, was a most dangerous assumption of power, leading to collision and the destruction of the system. And if, contrary to all our expectations, we should hereafter fail in the grand experiment of a confederate government extending over some of the fairest portions of this continent, and destined to act, at the same time, with efficiency and harmony, we should most grievously disappoint the hopes of mankind, and blast for ever the fruits of the Revolution.

“But, happily for us, the refutation of such dangerous pretensions, on the occasion referred to, was signal and complete. The false images and delusive theories which had perplexed the thoughts and disturbed the judgments of men, were then dissipated in like manner as spectres disappear at the rising of the sun. The inestimable value of the Union, and the true principles of the Constitution, were explained by clear and accurate reasonings, and enforced by pathetic and eloquent illustrations. The result was the more auspicious, as the heretical doctrines which were then fairly reasoned down had been advanced by a very respectable portion of the Union, and urged on the floor of the Senate by the polished mind, manly zeal, and honored name of a distinguished member from the South.

“The consequences of that discussion have been extremely beneficial. It turned the attention of the public to the great doctrines of national rights and national union. Constitutional law ceased to remain wrapped up in the breasts, and taught only by the responses, of the living oracles of the law. Socrates was said to have drawn down philosophy from the skies, and scattered it among the schools. It may with equal truth be said that constitutional law, by means of those senatorial discussions and the master genius that guided them, was rescued from the archives of our tribunals and the libraries of lawyers, and placed under the eye, and submitted to the judgment, of the American people. *Their verdict is with us, and from it there lies no appeal.*”

As soon as the immense cheering and acclamations with which this address and toast were received had subsided, Mr. Webster rose and addressed the company as follows.

Public Dinner at New York

I owe the honor of this occasion, Gentlemen, to your patriotic and affectionate attachment to the Constitution of our country. For an effort, well intended, however otherwise of unpretending character, made in the discharge of public duty, and designed to maintain the Constitution and vindicate its just powers, you have been pleased to tender me this token of your respect. It would be idle affectation to deny that it gives me singular gratification. Every public man must naturally desire the approbation of his fellow-citizens; and though it may be supposed that I should be anxious, in the first place, not to disappoint the expectations of those whose immediate representative I am, it is not possible but that I should feel, nevertheless, the high value of such a mark of esteem as is here offered. But, Gentlemen, I am conscious that the main purpose of this occasion is higher than mere manifestation of personal regard. It is to evince your devotion to the Constitution, your sense of its transcendent value, and your just alarm at whatever threatens to weaken its proper authority, or endanger its existence.

Gentlemen, this could hardly be otherwise. It would be strange, indeed, if the members of this vast commercial community should not be first and foremost to rally for the Constitution, whenever opinions and doctrines are advanced hostile to its principles. Where sooner than here, where louder than here, may we expect a patriotic voice to be raised, when the union of the States is threatened? In this great emporium, at this central point of the united commerce of the United States, of all places, we may expect the warmest, the most determined and universal feeling of attachment to the national government. Gentlemen, no one can estimate more highly than I do

the natural advantages of your city. No one entertains a higher opinion than myself, also, of that spirit of wise and liberal policy, which has actuated the government of your own great State in the accomplishment of high objects, important to the growth and prosperity both of the State and the city. But all these local advantages, and all this enlightened state policy, could never have made your city what it now is, without the aid and protection of a general government, extending over all the States, and establishing for all a common and uniform system of commercial regulation. Without national character, without public credit, without systematic finance, without uniformity of commercial laws, all other advantages possessed by this city would have decayed and perished, like unripe fruit. A general government was, for years before it was instituted, the great object of desire to the inhabitants of this city. New York, at a very early day, was conscious of her local advantages for commerce; she saw her destiny, and was eager to embrace it; but nothing else than a general government could make free her path before her, and set her forward on her brilliant career. She early saw all this, and to the accomplishment of this great and indispensable object she bent every faculty, and exerted every effort. She was not mistaken. She formed no false judgment. At the moment of the adoption of the Constitution, New York was the capital of one State, and contained thirty-two or three thousand people. It now contains more than two hundred thousand people, and is justly regarded as the commercial capital, not only of all the United States, but of the whole continent also, from the pole to the South Sea. Every page of her history, for the last forty years, bears high and irresistible testimony to the benefits and blessings of the general government. Her astonishing growth is referred to, and quoted, all the world over, as one of the most striking proofs of the effects of our Federal Union. To suppose her now to be easy and indifferent, when notions are advanced tending to its dissolution, would be to suppose her equally forgetful of the past and blind to the present, alike ignorant of her own history and her own interest, metamorphosed, from all that she has been, into a being tired of its prosperity, sick of its own growth and greatness, and infatuated for its own destruction. Every blow aimed at the union of the States strikes on the tenderest nerve of her interest

and her happiness. To bring the Union into debate is to bring her own future prosperity into debate also. To speak of arresting the laws of the Union, of interposing State power in matters of commerce and revenue, of weakening the full and just authority of the general government, would be, in regard to this city, but another mode of speaking of commercial ruin, of abandoned wharfs, of vacated houses, of diminished and dispersing population, of bankrupt merchants, of mechanics without employment, and laborers without bread. The growth of this city and the Constitution of the United States are coevals and contemporaries. They began together, they have flourished together, and if rashness and folly destroy one, the other will follow it to the tomb.

Gentlemen, it is true, indeed, that the growth of this city is extraordinary, and almost unexampled. It is now, I believe, sixteen or seventeen years since I first saw it. Within that comparatively short period, it has added to its number three times the whole amount of its population when the Constitution was adopted. Of all things having power to check this prosperity, of all things potent to blight and blast it, of all things capable of compelling this city to recede as fast as she has advanced, a disturbed government, an enfeebled public authority, a broken or a weakened union of the States, would be most efficacious. This would be cause efficient enough. Every thing else, in the common fortune of communities, she may hope to resist or to prevent; but this would be fatal as the arrow of death.

Gentlemen, you have personal recollections and associations, connected with the establishment and adoption of the Constitution, which are necessarily called up on an occasion like this. It is impossible to forget the prominent agency exercised by eminent citizens of your own, in regard to that great measure. Those great men are now recorded among the illustrious dead; but they have left names never to be forgotten, and never to be remembered without respect and veneration. Least of all can they be forgotten by you, when assembled here for the purpose of signifying your attachment to the Constitution, and your sense of its inestimable importance to the happiness of the people.

I should do violence to my own feelings, Gentlemen, I think I

should offend yours, if I omitted respectful mention of distinguished names yet fresh in your recollections. How can I stand here, to speak of the Constitution of the United States, of the wisdom of its provisions, of the difficulties attending its adoption, of the evils from which it rescued the country, and of the prosperity and power to which it has raised it, and yet pay no tribute to those who were highly instrumental in accomplishing the work? While we are here to rejoice that it yet stands firm and strong, while we congratulate one another that we live under its benign influence, and cherish hopes of its long duration, we cannot forget who they were that, in the day of our national infancy, in the times of despondency and despair, mainly assisted to work out our deliverance. I should feel that I was unfaithful to the strong recollections which the occasion presses upon us, that I was not true to gratitude, not true to patriotism, not true to the living or the dead, not true to your feelings or my own, if I should forbear to make mention of

ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Coming from the military service of the country yet a youth, but with knowledge and maturity, even in civil affairs, far beyond his years, he made this city the place of his adoption; and he gave the whole powers of his mind to the contemplation of the weak and distracted condition of the country. Daily increasing in acquaintance and confidence with the people of New York, he saw, what they also saw, the absolute necessity of some closer bond of union for the States. This was the great object of desire. He never appears to have lost sight of it, but was found in the lead whenever any thing was to be attempted for its accomplishment. One experiment after another, as is well known, was tried, and all failed. The States were urgently called on to confer such further powers on the old Congress as would enable it to redeem the public faith, or to adopt, themselves, some general and common principle of commercial regulation. But the States had not agreed, and were not likely to agree. In this posture of affairs, so full of public difficulty and public distress, commissioners from five or six of the States met, on the request of Virginia, at Annapolis, in September, 1786. The precise object of their appointment was to take into consideration the trade of the United States; to examine the relative situations and trade of the several States; and to consider how

Alexander Hamilton

From a Drawing, after the Painting by John Trumbull



Portrait of a man, 18th century.



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far a uniform system of commercial regulations was necessary to their common interest and permanent harmony. Mr. Hamilton was one of these commissioners; and I have understood, though I cannot assert the fact, that their report was drawn by him. His associate from this State was the venerable Judge Benson, who has lived long, and still lives, to see the happy results of the counsels which originated in this meeting. Of its members, he and Mr. Madison are, I believe, now the only survivors. These commissioners recommended, what took place the next year, a general Convention of all the States, to take into serious deliberation the condition of the country, and devise such provisions as should render the constitution of the federal government adequate to the exigencies of the Union. I need not remind you, that of this Convention Mr. Hamilton was an active and efficient member. The Constitution was framed, and submitted to the country. And then another great work was to be undertaken. The Constitution would naturally find, and did find, enemies and opposers. Objections to it were numerous, and powerful, and spirited. They were to be answered; and they were effectually answered. The writers of the numbers of the *Federalist*, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Madison, and Mr. Jay, so greatly distinguished themselves in their discussions of the Constitution, that those numbers are generally received as important commentaries on the text, and accurate expositions, in general, of its objects and purposes. Those papers were all written and published in this city. Mr. Hamilton was elected one of the distinguished delegation from the city to the State Convention at Poughkeepsie, called to ratify the new Constitution. Its debates are published. Mr. Hamilton appears to have exerted, on this occasion, to the utmost, every power and faculty of his mind.

The whole question was likely to depend on the decision of New York. He felt the full importance of the crisis; and the reports of his speeches, imperfect as they probably are, are yet lasting monuments to his genius and patriotism. He saw at last his hopes fulfilled; he saw the Constitution adopted, and the government under it established and organized. The discerning eye of Washington immediately called him to that post, which was far the most important in the administration of the new system. He was made Secretary of the Treasury; and how he fulfilled the duties of such a place, at such a time, the

whole country perceived with delight and the whole world saw with admiration. He smote the rock of the national resources, and abundant streams of revenue gushed forth. He touched the dead corpse of the Public Credit, and it sprung upon its feet. The fabled birth of Minerva, from the brain of Jove, was hardly more sudden or more perfect than the financial system of the United States, as it burst forth from the conceptions of ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

Your recollections, Gentlemen, your respect, and your affections, all conspire to bring before you, at such a time as this, another great man, now too numbered with the dead. I mean the pure, the disinterested, the patriotic JOHN JAY. His character is a brilliant jewel in the sacred treasures of national reputation. Leaving his profession at an early period, yet not before he had singularly distinguished himself in it, his whole life, from the commencement of the Revolution until his final retirement, was a life of public service. A member of the first Congress, he was the author of that political paper which is generally acknowledged to stand first among the incomparable productions of that body;* productions which called forth that decisive strain of commendation from the great Lord Chatham, in which he pronounced them not inferior to the finest productions of the master states of the world. Mr. Jay had been abroad, and he had also been long intrusted with the difficult duties of our foreign correspondence at home. He had seen and felt, in the fullest measure and to the greatest possible extent, the difficulty of conducting our foreign affairs honorably and usefully, without a stronger and more perfect domestic union. Though not a member of the Convention which framed the Constitution, he was yet present while it was in session, and looked anxiously for its result. By the choice of this city, he had a seat in the State Convention, and took an active and zealous part for the adoption of the Constitution. On the organization of the new government, he was selected by Washington to be the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States; and surely the high and most responsible duties of that station could not have been trusted to abler or safer hands. It is the duty of that tribunal, one of equal importance and delicacy, to decide consti-

* Address to the People of Great Britain.

Robert R. Livingston

From the Painting by John Vanderlyn,
New York Historical Society



A. W. Elson & Co., Boston.

tutional questions, occasionally arising on State laws. The general learning and ability, and especially the prudence, the mildness, and the firmness of his character, eminently fitted Mr. Jay to be the head of such a court. When the spotless ermine of the judicial robe fell on John Jay, it touched nothing less spotless than itself.

These eminent men, Gentlemen, the contemporaries of some of you, known to most, and revered by all, were so conspicuous in the framing and adopting of the Constitution, and called so early to important stations under it, that a tribute, better, indeed, than I have given, or am able to give, seemed due to them from us, on this occasion.

There was yet another, of whom mention is to be made. In the Revolutionary history of the country, the name of CHANCELLOR LIVINGSTON became early prominent. He was a member of that Congress which declared Independence; and a member, too, of the committee which drew and reported the immortal Declaration. At the period of the adoption of the Constitution, he was its firm friend and able advocate. He was a member of the State Convention, being one of that list of distinguished and gifted men who represented this city in that body; and he threw the whole weight of his talents and influence into the doubtful scale of the Constitution.

Gentlemen, as connected with the Constitution, you have also local recollections which must bind it still closer to your attachment and affection. It commenced its being and its blessings here. It was in this city, in the midst of friends, anxious, hopeful, and devoted, that the new government started in its course. To us, Gentlemen, who are younger, it has come down by tradition; but some around me are old enough to have witnessed, and did witness, the interesting scene of the first inauguration. They remember what voices of gratified patriotism, what shouts of enthusiastic hope, what acclamations rent the air, how many eyes were suffused with tears of joy, how cordially each man pressed the hand of him who was next to him, when, standing in the open air, in the centre of the city, in the view of assembled thousands, the first President of the United States was heard solemnly to pronounce the words of his official oath, repeating them from the lips of Chancellor Livingston. You then thought, Gentlemen, that the great work of the Revolution was accomplished.

You then felt that you had a government; that the United States were then, indeed, united. Every benignant star seemed to shed its selectest influence on that auspicious hour. Here were heroes of the Revolution; here were sages of the Convention; here were minds, disciplined and schooled in all the various fortunes of the country, acting now in several relations, but all coöperating to the same great end, the successful administration of the new and untried Constitution. And he,—how shall I speak of him?—he was at the head, who was already first in war, who was already first in the hearts of his countrymen, and who was now shown also, by the unanimous suffrage of the country, to be first in peace.

Gentlemen, how gloriously have the hopes then indulged been fulfilled! Whose expectation was then so sanguine, I may almost ask, whose imagination then so extravagant, as to run forward, and contemplate as probable, the one half of what has been accomplished in forty years? Who among you can go back to 1789, and see what this city, and this country, too, then were; and, beholding what they now are, can be ready to consent that the Constitution of the United States shall be weakened,—dishonored,—*nullified*?

Gentlemen, before I leave these pleasant recollections, I feel it an irresistible impulse of duty to pay a tribute of respect to another distinguished person, not, indeed, a fellow-citizen of your own, but associated with those I have already mentioned in important labors, and an early and indefatigable friend and advocate in the great cause of the Constitution. I refer to Mr. MADISON. I am aware, Gentlemen, that a tribute of regard from me to him is of little importance; but if it shall receive your approbation and sanction, it will become of value. Mr. Madison, thanks to a kind Providence, is yet among the living, and there is certainly no other individual living, to whom the country is so much indebted for the blessings of the Constitution. He was one of the commissioners who met at Annapolis, in 1786, to which meeting I have already referred, and which, to the great credit of Virginia, had its origin in a proceeding of that State. He was a member of the Convention of 1787, and of that of Virginia in the following year. He was thus intimately acquainted with the whole progress of the formation of the Constitution, from its very first step to its final adoption. If

ever man had the means of understanding a written instrument, Mr. Madison has the means of understanding the Constitution. If it be possible to know what was designed by it, he can tell us. It was in this city, that, in conjunction with Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Jay, he wrote the numbers of the *Federalist*; and it was in this city that he commenced his brilliant career under the new Constitution, having been elected into the House of Representatives of the first Congress. The recorded votes and debates of those times show his active and efficient agency in every important measure of that Congress. The necessary organization of the government, the arrangement of the departments, and especially the paramount subject of revenue, engaged his attention, and divided his labors.

The legislative history of the first two or three years of the government is full of instruction. It presents, in striking light, the evils intended to be remedied by the Constitution, and the provisions which were deemed essential to the remedy of those evils. It exhibits the country, in the moment of its change from a weak and ill-defined confederacy of States, into a general, efficient, but still restrained and limited government. It shows the first working of our peculiar system, moved, as it then was, by master hands.

Gentlemen, for one, I confess I like to dwell on this part of our history. It is good for us to be here. It is good for us to study the situation of the country at this period, to survey its difficulties, to look at the conduct of its public men, to see how they struggled with obstacles, real and formidable, and how gloriously they brought the Union out of its state of depression and distress. Truly, Gentlemen, these founders and fathers of the Constitution were great men, and thoroughly furnished for every good work. All that reading and learning could do; all that talent and intelligence could do; and, what perhaps is still more, all that long experience in difficult and troubled times and a deep and intimate practical knowledge of the condition of the country could do, — conspired to fit them for the great business of forming a general, but limited government, embracing common objects, extending over all the States, and yet touching the power of the States no further than those common objects require. I confess I love to linger around these original fountains, and to drink deep of their waters. I love to imbibe.

in as full measure as I may, the spirit of those who laid the foundations of the government, and so wisely and skilfully balanced and adjusted its bearings and proportions.

Having been afterwards, for eight years, Secretary of State, and as long President, Mr. Madison has had an experience in the affairs of the Constitution, certainly second to no man. More than any other man living, and perhaps more than any other who has lived, his whole public life has been incorporated, as it were, into the Constitution; in the original conception and project of attempting to form it, in its actual framing, in explaining and recommending it, by speaking and writing, in assisting at the first organization of the government under it, and in a long administration of its executive powers, — in these various ways he has lived near the Constitution, and with the power of imbibing its true spirit, and inhaling its very breath, from its first pulsation of life. Again, therefore, I ask, If he cannot tell us what the Constitution is, and what it means, who can? He had retired with the respect and regard of the community, and might naturally be supposed not willing to interfere again in matters of political concern. He has, nevertheless, not withholden his opinions on the vital question discussed on that occasion, which has caused this meeting. He has stated, with an accuracy almost peculiar to himself, and so stated as, in my opinion, to place almost beyond further controversy, the true doctrines of the Constitution. He has stated, not notions too loose and irregular to be called even a theory, not ideas struck out by the feeling of present inconvenience or supposed mal-administration, not suggestions of expediency, or evasions of fair and straightforward construction, but elementary principles, clear and sound distinctions, and indisputable truths. I am sure, Gentlemen, that I speak your sentiments, as well as my own, when I say, that, for making public so clearly and distinctly as he has done his own opinions on these vital questions of constitutional law, Mr. Madison has founded a new and strong claim on the gratitude of a grateful country. You will think, with me, that, at his advanced age, and in the enjoyment of general respect and approbation for a long career of public services, it was an act of distinguished patriotism, when he saw notions promulgated and maintained which he deemed unsound and dangerous, not to hesitate to come forward and to place the

weight of his own opinion in what he deemed the right scale, come what come might. I am sure, Gentlemen, it cannot be doubted,—the manifestation is clear,—that the country feels deeply the force of this new obligation.*

Gentlemen, what I have said of the benefits of the Constitution to your city might be said, with little change, in respect to every other part of the country. Its benefits are not exclusive. What has it left undone, which any government could do, for the whole country? In what condition has it placed us? Where do we now stand? Are we elevated, or degraded, by its operation? What is our condition under its influence, at the very moment when some talk of arresting its power and breaking its unity? Do we not feel ourselves on an eminence? Do we not challenge the respect of the whole world? What has placed us thus high? What has given us this just pride? What else is it, but the unrestrained and free operation of that same Federal Constitution, which it has been proposed now to hamper, and manacle, and nullify? Who is there among us, that, should he find himself on any spot of the earth where human beings exist, and where the existence of other nations is known, would not be proud to say, I am an American? I am a countryman of Washington? I am a citizen of that republic, which, although it has suddenly sprung up, yet there are none on the globe who have ears to hear, and have not heard of it; who have eyes to see, and have not read of it; who know any thing, and yet do not know of its existence and its glory? And, Gentlemen, let me now reverse the picture. Let me ask, who there is among us, if he were to be found to-morrow in one of the civilized countries of Europe, and were there to learn that this goodly form of government had been overthrown, that the United States were no longer united, that a death-blow had been struck upon their bond of union, that they themselves had destroyed their chief good and their chief honor,—who is there whose heart would not sink within him? Who is there who would not cover his face for very shame?

At this very moment, Gentlemen, our country is a general refuge for the distressed and the persecuted of other nations. Whoever is in affliction from political occurrences in his own

* The reference is to Mr. Madison's letter on the subject of *Nullification*, in the North American Review, Vol. XXXI. p. 537.

country looks here for shelter. Whether he be republican, flying from the oppression of thrones, or whether he be monarch or monarchist, flying from thrones that crumble and fall under or around him, he feels equal assurance, that, if he get foothold on our soil, his person will be safe, and his rights will be respected.

And who will venture to say, that, in any government now existing in the world, there is greater security for persons or property than in that of the United States? We have tried these popular institutions in times of great excitement and commotion, and they have stood, substantially, firm and steady, while the fountains of the great political deep have been elsewhere broken up; while thrones, resting on ages of prescription, have tottered and fallen; and while, in other countries, the earthquake of unrestrained popular commotion has swallowed up all law, and all liberty, and all right together. Our government has been tried in peace, and it has been tried in war, and has proved itself fit for both. It has been assailed from without, and it has successfully resisted the shock; it has been disturbed within, and it has effectually quieted the disturbance. It can stand trial, it can stand assault, it can stand adversity, it can stand every thing, but the marring of its own beauty, and the weakening of its own strength. It can stand every thing but the effects of our own rashness and our own folly. It can stand every thing but disorganization, disunion, and nullification.

It is a striking fact, and as true as it is striking, that at this very moment, among all the principal civilized states of the world, *that* government is most secure against the danger of popular commotion which is itself entirely popular. It seems, indeed, that the submission of every thing to the public will, under constitutional restraints, imposed by the people themselves, furnishes itself security that they will desire nothing wrong.

Certain it is, that popular, constitutional liberty, as we enjoy it, appears, in the present state of the world, as sure and stable a basis for government to rest upon, as any government of enlightened states can find, or does find. Certain it is, that, in these times of so much popular knowledge, and so much popular activity, those governments which do not admit the people to partake in their administration, but keep them under and beneath, sit on materials for an explosion, which may take place at any moment, and blow them into a thousand atoms.

Gentlemen, let any man who would degrade and enfeeble the national Constitution, let any man who would nullify its laws, stand forth and tell us what he would wish. What does he propose? Whatever he may be, and whatever substitute he may hold forth, I am sure the people of this country will decline his kind interference, and hold on by the Constitution which they possess. Any one who would willingly destroy it, I rejoice to know, would be looked upon with abhorrence. It is deeply entrenched in the regards of the people. Doubtless it may be undermined by artful and long-continued hostility; it may be imperceptibly weakened by secret attack; it may be insidiously shorn of its powers by slow degrees; the public vigilance may be lulled, and when it awakes, it may find the Constitution frittered away. In these modes, or some of them, it is possible that the union of the States may be dissolved.

But if the general attention of the people be kept alive, if they see the intended mischief before it is effected, they will prevent it by their own sovereign power. They will interpose themselves between the meditated blow and the object of their regard and attachment. Next to the controlling authority of the people themselves, the preservation of the government is mainly committed to those who administer it. If conducted in wisdom, it cannot but stand strong. Its genuine, original spirit is a patriotic, liberal, and generous spirit; a spirit of conciliation, of moderation, of candor, and charity; a spirit of friendship, and not a spirit of hostility toward the States; a spirit careful not to exceed, and equally careful not to relinquish, its just powers. While no interest can or ought to feel itself shut out from the benefits of the Constitution, none should consider those benefits as exclusively its own. The interests of all must be consulted, and reconciled, and provided for, as far as possible, that all may perceive the benefits of a united government.

Among other things, we are to remember that new States have arisen, possessing already an immense population, spreading and thickening over vast regions which were a wilderness when the Constitution was adopted. Those States are not, like New York, directly connected with maritime commerce. They are entirely agricultural, and need markets for consumption; and they need, too, access to those markets. It is the duty of the government to bring the interests of these new States into

the Union, and incorporate them closely in the family compact. Gentlemen, it is not impracticable to reconcile these various interests, and so to administer the government as to make it useful to all. It was never easier to administer the government than it is now. We are beset with none, or with few, of its original difficulties; and it is a time of great general prosperity and happiness. Shall we admit ourselves incompetent to carry on the government, so as to be satisfactory to the whole country? Shall we admit that there has so little descended to us of the wisdom and prudence of our fathers? If the government could be administered in Washington's time, when it was yet new, when the country was heavily in debt, when foreign relations were in a threatening condition, and when Indian wars pressed on the frontiers, can it not be administered now? Let us not acknowledge ourselves so unequal to our duties.

Gentlemen, on the occasion referred to by the chair, it became necessary to consider the judicial power, and its proper functions under the Constitution. In every free and balanced government, this is a most essential and important power. Indeed, I think it is a remark of Mr. Hume, that the administration of justice seems to be the leading object of institutions of government; that legislatures assemble, that armies are embodied, that both war and peace are made, with a sort of ultimate reference to the proper administration of laws, and the judicial protection of private rights. The judicial power comes home to every man. If the legislature passes incorrect or unjust general laws, its members bear the evil as well as others. But judicature acts on individuals. It touches every private right, every private interest, and almost every private feeling. What we possess is hardly fit to be called our own, unless we feel secure in its possession; and this security, this feeling of perfect safety, cannot exist under a wicked, or even under a weak and ignorant, administration of the laws. There is no happiness, there is no liberty, there is no enjoyment of life, unless a man can say when he rises in the morning, I shall be subject to the decision of no unjust judge to-day.

But, Gentlemen, the judicial department, under the Constitution of the United States, possesses still higher duties. It is true, that it may be called on, and is occasionally called on, to decide questions which are, in one sense, of a political nature.

The general and State governments, both established by the people, are established for different purposes, and with different powers. Between those powers questions may arise; and who shall decide them? Some provision for this end is absolutely necessary. What shall it be? This was the question before the Convention; and various schemes were suggested. It was foreseen that the States might inadvertently pass laws inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States, or with acts of Congress. At least, laws might be passed which would be charged with such inconsistency. How should these questions be disposed of? Where shall the power of judging, in cases of alleged interference, be lodged? One suggestion in the Convention was, to make it an executive power, and to lodge it in the hands of the President, by requiring all State laws to be submitted to him, that he might negative such as he thought appeared repugnant to the general Constitution. This idea, perhaps, may have been borrowed from the power exercised by the crown over the laws of the Colonies. It would evidently have been, not only an inconvenient and troublesome proceeding, but dangerous also to the powers of the States. It was not pressed. It was thought wiser and safer, on the whole, to require State legislatures and State judges to take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States, and then leave the States at liberty to pass whatever laws they pleased, and if interference, in point of fact, should arise, to refer the question to judicial decision. To this end, the judicial power, under the Constitution of the United States, was made coextensive with the legislative power. It was extended to all cases arising under the Constitution and the laws of Congress. The judiciary became thus possessed of the authority of deciding, in the last resort, in all cases of alleged interference, between State laws and the Constitution and laws of Congress.

Gentlemen, this is the actual Constitution, this is the law of the land. There may be those who think it unnecessary, or who would prefer a different mode of deciding such questions. But this is the established mode, and, till it be altered, the courts can no more decline their duty on these occasions than on other occasions. But can any reasonable man doubt the expediency of this provision, or suggest a better? Is it not absolutely essential to the peace of the country that this power should exist

somewhere? Where can it exist, better than where it now does exist? The national judiciary is the common tribunal of the whole country. It is organized by the common authority, and its places filled by the common agent. This is a plain and practical provision. It was framed by no bunglers, nor by any wild theorists. And who can say that it has failed? Who can find substantial fault with its operation or its results? The great question is, whether we shall provide for the peaceable decision of cases of collision. Shall they be decided by law, or by force? Shall the decisions be decisions of peace, or decisions of war?

On the occasion which has given rise to this meeting, the proposition contended for in opposition to the doctrine just stated was, that every State, under certain supposed exigencies, and in certain supposed cases, might decide for itself, and act for itself, and oppose its own force to the execution of the laws. By what argument, do you imagine, Gentlemen, was such a proposition maintained? I should call it metaphysical and subtle; but these terms would imply at least ingenuity, and some degree of plausibility; whereas the argument appears to me plain assumption, mere perverse construction of plain language in the body of the Constitution itself. As I understand it, when put forth in its revised and most authentic shape, it is this: that the Constitution provides that any amendments may be made to it which shall be agreed to by three fourths of the States; there is, therefore, to be nothing in the Constitution to which three fourths of the States have not agreed. All this is true; but then comes this inference, namely, that, when one State denies the constitutionality of any law of Congress, she may arrest its execution as to herself, and keep it arrested, till the States can all be consulted by their conventions, and three fourths of them shall have decided that the law is constitutional. Indeed, the inference is still stranger than this; for State conventions have no authority to construe the Constitution, though they have authority to amend it; therefore the argument must prove, if it prove any thing, that, when any one State denies that any particular power is included in the Constitution, it is to be considered as not included, and cannot be found there till three fourths of the States agree to insert it. In short, the result of the whole is, that, though it requires three fourths of the

States to insert any thing in the Constitution, yet any one State can strike any thing out of it. For the power to strike out, and the power of deciding, without appeal, upon the construction of what is already in, are substantially and practically the same.

And, Gentlemen, what a spectacle should we have exhibited under the actual operation of notions like these! At the very moment when our government was quoted, praised, and commended all over the world, when the friends of republican liberty everywhere were gazing at it with delight, and were in perfect admiration at the harmony of its movements, one State steps forth, and, by the power of nullification, breaks up the whole system, and scatters the bright chain of the Union into as many sundered links as there are separate States!

Seeing the true grounds of the Constitution thus attacked, I raised my voice in its favor, I must confess with no preparation or previous intention. I can hardly say that I embarked in the contest from a sense of duty. It was an instantaneous impulse of inclination, not acting against duty, I trust, but hardly waiting for its suggestions. I felt it to be a contest for the integrity of the Constitution, and I was ready to enter into it, not thinking, or caring, personally, how I might come out.

Gentlemen, I have true pleasure in saying that I trust the crisis has in some measure passed by. The doctrines of nullification have received a severe and stern rebuke from public opinion. The general reprobation of the country has been cast upon them. Recent expressions of the most numerous branch of the national legislature are decisive and imposing. Everywhere, the general tone of public feeling is for the Constitution. While much will be yielded — every thing, almost, but the integrity of the Constitution, and the essential interests of the country — to the cause of mutual harmony and mutual conciliation, no ground can be granted, not an inch, to menace and bluster. Indeed, menace and bluster, and the putting forth of daring, unconstitutional doctrines, are, at this very moment, the chief obstacles to mutual harmony and satisfactory accommodation. Men cannot well reason, and confer, and take counsel together, about the discreet exercise of a power, with those who deny that any such power rightfully exists, and who threaten to blow up the whole Constitution if they cannot otherwise get rid of its

operation. It is matter of sincere gratification, Gentlemen, that the voice of this great State has been so clear and strong, and her vote all but unanimous, on the most interesting of these occasions, in the House of Representatives. Certainly, such respect to the Union becomes New York. It is consistent with her interests and her character. That singularly prosperous State, which now is, and is likely to continue to be, the greatest link in the chain of the Union, will ever be, I am sure, the strongest link also. The great States which lie in her neighborhood agreed with her fully in this matter. Pennsylvania, I believe, was loyal to the Union, to a man; and Ohio raises her voice, like that of a lion, against whatsoever threatens disunion and dismemberment. This harmony of sentiment is truly gratifying. It is not to be gainsaid, that the union of opinion in this great central mass of our population, on this momentous point of the Constitution, augurs well for our future prosperity and security.

I have said, Gentlemen, what I verily believe to be true, that there is no danger to the Union from open and avowed attacks on its essential principles. Nothing is to be feared from those who will march up boldly to their own propositions, and tell us that they mean to annihilate powers exercised by Congress. But, certainly, there are dangers to the Constitution, and we ought not to shut our eyes to them. We know the importance of a firm and intelligent judiciary; but how shall we secure the continuance of a firm and intelligent judiciary? Gentlemen, the judiciary is in the appointment of the executive power. It cannot continue or renew itself. Its vacancies are to be filled in the ordinary modes of executive appointment. If the time shall ever come (which Heaven avert), when men shall be placed in the supreme tribunal of the country, who entertain opinions hostile to the just powers of the Constitution, we shall then be visited by an evil defying all remedy. Our case will be past surgery. From that moment the Constitution is at an end. If they who are appointed to defend the castle shall betray it, woe betide those within! If I live to see that day come, I shall despair of the country. I shall be prepared to give it back to all its former afflictions, in the days of the Confederation. I know no security against the possibility of this evil, but an awakened public vigilance. I know no safety, but in that state of public

opinion which shall lead it to rebuke and put down every attempt, either to gratify party by judicial appointments, or to dilute the Constitution by creating a court which shall construe away its provisions. If members of Congress betray their trust, the people will find it out before they are ruined. If the President should at any time violate his duty, his term of office is short, and popular elections may supply a seasonable remedy. But the judges of the Supreme Court possess, for very good reasons, an independent tenure of office. No election reaches them. If, with this tenure, they betray their trusts, Heaven save us! Let us hope for better results. The past, certainly, may encourage us. Let us hope that we shall never see the time when there shall exist such an awkward posture of affairs, as that the government shall be found in opposition to the Constitution, and when the guardians of the Union shall become its betrayers.

Gentlemen, our country stands, at the present time, on commanding ground. Older nations, with different systems of government, may be somewhat slow to acknowledge all that justly belongs to us. But we may feel without vanity, that America is doing her part in the great work of improving human affairs. There are two principles, Gentlemen, strictly and purely American, which are now likely to prevail throughout the civilized world. Indeed, they seem the necessary result of the progress of civilization and knowledge. These are, first, popular governments, restrained by written constitutions; and, secondly, universal education. Popular governments and general education, acting and reacting, mutually producing and reproducing each other, are the mighty agencies which in our days appear to be exciting, stimulating, and changing civilized societies. Man, everywhere, is now found demanding a participation in government, — and he will not be refused; and he demands knowledge as necessary to self-government. On the basis of these two principles, liberty and knowledge, our own American systems rest. Thus far we have not been disappointed in their results. Our existing institutions, raised on these foundations, have conferred on us almost unmixed happiness. Do we hope to better our condition by change? When we shall have nullified the present Constitution, what are we to receive in its place? As

fathers, do we wish for our children better government, or better laws? As members of society, as lovers of our country, is there any thing we can desire for it better than that, as ages and centuries roll over it, it may possess the same invaluable institutions which it now enjoys? For my part, Gentlemen, I can only say, that I desire to thank the beneficent Author of all good for being born *where* I was born, and *when* I was born; that the portion of human existence allotted to me has been meted out to me in this goodly land, and at this interesting period. I rejoice that I have lived to see so much development of truth, so much progress of liberty, so much diffusion of virtue and happiness. And, through good report and evil report, it will be my consolation to be a citizen of a republic unequalled in the annals of the world for the freedom of its institutions, its high prosperity, and the prospects of good which yet lie before it. Our course, Gentlemen, is onward, straight onward, and forward. Let us not turn to the right hand, nor to the left. Our path is marked out for us, clear, plain, bright, distinctly defined, like the milky way across the heavens. If we are true to our country, in our day and generation, and those who come after us shall be true to it also, assuredly, assuredly, we shall elevate her to a pitch of prosperity and happiness, of honor and power, never yet reached by any nation beneath the sun.

Gentlemen, before I resume my seat, a highly gratifying duty remains to be performed. In signifying your sentiments of regard, you have kindly chosen to select as your organ for expressing them the eminent person* near whom I stand. I feel, I cannot well say how sensibly, the manner in which he has seen fit to speak on this occasion. Gentlemen, if I may be supposed to have made any attainment in the knowledge of constitutional law, he is among the masters in whose schools I have been taught. You see near him a distinguished magistrate,† long associated with him in judicial labors, which have conferred lasting benefits and lasting character, not only on the State, but on the whole country. Gentlemen, I acknowledge myself much their debtor. While yet a youth, unknown, and with little expectation of becoming known beyond a very lim-

* Chancellor Kent, the presiding officer.

† Judge Spencer.

ited circle, I have passed days and nights, not of tedious, but of happy and gratified labor, in the study of the judicature of the State of New York. I am most happy to have this public opportunity of acknowledging the obligation, and of repaying it as far as it can be repaid, by the poor tribute of my profound regard, and the earnest expression of my sincere respect.

Gentlemen, I will no longer detain you than to propose a toast:—

The City of New York; herself the noblest eulogy on the Union of the States.

The Character of Washington

The Character of Washington*

ON the 22d of February, 1832, being the centennial birthday of GEORGE WASHINGTON, a number of gentlemen, members of Congress and others, from different parts of the Union, united in commemorating the occasion by a public dinner in the city of Washington.

At the request of the Committee of Arrangements, Mr. Webster, then a Senator from Massachusetts, occupied the chair. After the cloth was removed, he addressed the company in the following manner :—

I RISE, Gentlemen, to propose to you the name of that great man, in commemoration of whose birth, and in honor of whose character and services, we are here assembled.

I am sure that I express a sentiment common to every one present, when I say that there is something more than ordinarily solemn and affecting in this occasion.

We are met to testify our regard for him whose name is intimately blended with whatever belongs most essentially to the prosperity, the liberty, the free institutions, and the renown of our country. That name was of power to rally a nation, in the hour of thick-thronging public disasters and calamities; that name shone, amid the storm of war, a beacon light, to cheer and guide the country's friends; it flamed, too, like a meteor, to repel her foes. That name, in the days of peace, was a loadstone, attracting to itself a whole people's confidence, a whole people's love, and the whole world's respect. That name, descending with all time, spreading over the whole earth, and uttered in all the languages belonging to the tribes and races of men, will for ever be pronounced with affectionate gratitude by

* A Speech delivered at a Public Dinner in Honor of the Centennial Birthday of Washington, on the 22d of February, 1832.

every one in whose breast there shall arise an aspiration for human rights and human liberty.

We perform this grateful duty, Gentlemen, at the expiration of a hundred years from his birth, near the place, so cherished and beloved by him, where his dust now reposes, and in the capital which bears his own immortal name.

All experience evinces that human sentiments are strongly influenced by associations. The recurrence of anniversaries, or of longer periods of time, naturally freshens the recollection, and deepens the impression, of events with which they are historically connected. Renowned places, also, have a power to awaken feeling, which all acknowledge. No American can pass by the fields of Bunker Hill, Monmouth, and Camden, as if they were ordinary spots on the earth's surface. Whoever visits them feels the sentiment of love of country kindling anew, as if the spirit that belonged to the transactions which have rendered these places distinguished still hovered round, with power to move and excite all who in future time may approach them.

But neither of these sources of emotion equals the power with which great moral examples affect the mind. When sublime virtues cease to be abstractions, when they become embodied in human character, and exemplified in human conduct, we should be false to our own nature, if we did not indulge in the spontaneous effusions of our gratitude and our admiration. A true lover of the virtue of patriotism delights to contemplate its purest models; and that love of country may be well suspected which affects to soar so high into the regions of sentiment as to be lost and absorbed in the abstract feeling, and becomes too elevated or too refined to glow with fervor in the commendation or the love of individual benefactors. All this is unnatural. It is as if one should be so enthusiastic a lover of poetry, as to care nothing for Homer or Milton; so passionately attached to eloquence as to be indifferent to Tully and Chatham; or such a devotee to the arts, in such an ecstasy with the elements of beauty, proportion, and expression, as to regard the masterpieces of Raphael and Michael Angelo with coldness or contempt. We may be assured, Gentlemen, that he who really loves the thing itself, loves its finest exhibitions. A true friend of his country loves her friends and benefactors, and thinks it no degradation to commend and commemorate them. The volun-

tary outpouring of the public feeling, made to-day, from the North to the South, and from the East to the West, proves this sentiment to be both just and natural. In the cities and in the villages, in the public temples and in the family circles, among all ages and sexes, gladdened voices to-day bespeak grateful hearts and a freshened recollection of the virtues of the Father of his Country. And it will be so, in all time to come, so long as public virtue is itself an object of regard. The ingenuous youth of America will hold up to themselves the bright model of Washington's example, and study to be what they behold; they will contemplate his character till all its virtues spread out and display themselves to their delighted vision; as the earliest astronomers, the shepherds on the plains of Babylon, gazed at the stars till they saw them form into clusters and constellations, overpowering at length the eyes of the beholders with the united blaze of a thousand lights.

Gentlemen, we are at the point of a century from the birth of Washington; and what a century it has been! During its course, the human mind has seemed to proceed with a sort of geometric velocity, accomplishing, for human intelligence and human freedom, more than had been done in fives or tens of centuries preceding. Washington stands at the commencement of a new era, as well as at the head of the New World. A century from the birth of Washington has changed the world. The country of Washington has been the theatre on which a great part of that change has been wrought; and Washington himself a principal agent by which it has been accomplished. His age and his country are equally full of wonders; and of both he is the chief.

If the poetical prediction, uttered a few years before his birth, be true; if indeed it be designed by Providence that the grandest exhibition of human character and human affairs shall be made on this theatre of the Western world; if it be true that,

“The four first acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama of the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last”;

how could this imposing, swelling, final scene be appropriately opened, how could its intense interest be adequately sustained, but by the introduction of just such a character as our Washington?

Washington had attained his manhood when that spark of liberty was struck out in his own country, which has since kindled into a flame, and shot its beams over the earth. In the flow of a century from his birth, the world has changed in science, in arts, in the extent of commerce, in the improvement of navigation, and in all that relates to the civilization of man. But it is the spirit of human freedom, the new elevation of individual man, in his moral, social, and political character, leading the whole long train of other improvements, which has most remarkably distinguished the era. Society, in this century, has not made its progress, like Chinese skill, by a greater acuteness of ingenuity in trifles; it has not merely lashed itself to an increased speed round the old circles of thought and action; but it has assumed a new character; it has raised itself from *beneath* governments to a participation *in* governments; it has mixed moral and political objects with the daily pursuits of individual men; and, with a freedom and strength before altogether unknown, it has applied to these objects the whole power of the human understanding. It has been the era, in short, when the social principle has triumphed over the feudal principle; when society has maintained its rights against military power, and established, on foundations never hereafter to be shaken, its competency to govern itself.

It was the extraordinary fortune of Washington, that, having been intrusted, in revolutionary times, with the supreme military command, and having fulfilled that trust with equal renown for wisdom and for valor, he should be placed at the head of the first government in which an attempt was to be made on a large scale to rear the fabric of social order on the basis of a written constitution and of a pure representative principle. A government was to be established, without a throne, without an aristocracy, without castes, orders, or privileges; and this government, instead of being a democracy, existing and acting within the walls of a single city, was to be extended over a vast country, of different climates, interests, and habits, and of various communions of our common Christian faith. The experiment certainly was entirely new. A popular government of this extent, it was evident, could be framed only by carrying into full effect the principle of representation or of delegated power; and the world was to see whether society could, by the strength of

this principle, maintain its own peace and good government, carry forward its own great interests, and conduct itself to political renown and glory. By the benignity of Providence, this experiment, so full of interest to us and to our posterity for ever, so full of interest, indeed, to the world in its present generation and in all its generations to come, was suffered to commence under the guidance of Washington. Destined for this high career, he was fitted for it by wisdom, by virtue, by patriotism, by discretion, by whatever can inspire confidence in man toward man. In entering on the untried scenes, early disappointment and the premature extinction of all hope of success would have been certain, had it not been that there did exist throughout the country, in a most extraordinary degree, an unwavering trust in him who stood at the helm.

I remarked, Gentlemen, that the whole world was and is interested in the result of this experiment. And is it not so? Do we deceive ourselves, or is it true that at this moment the career which this government is running is among the most attractive objects to the civilized world? Do we deceive ourselves, or is it true that at this moment that love of liberty and that understanding of its true principles which are flying over the whole earth, as on the wings of all the winds, are really and truly of American origin?

At the period of the birth of Washington, there existed in Europe no political liberty in large communities, except in the provinces of Holland, and except that England herself had set a great example, so far as it went, by her glorious Revolution of 1688. Everywhere else, despotic power was predominant, and the feudal or military principle held the mass of mankind in hopeless bondage. One half of Europe was crushed beneath the Bourbon sceptre, and no conception of political liberty, no hope even of religious toleration, existed among that nation which was America's first ally. The king was the state, the king was the country, the king was all. There was one king, with power not derived from his people, and too high to be questioned; and the rest were all subjects, with no political right but obedience. All above was intangible power, all below quiet subjection. A recent occurrence in the French Chambers shows us how public opinion on these subjects is changed. A minister had spoken of the "king's subjects." "There are no

subjects," exclaimed hundreds of voices at once, "in a country where the people make the king!"

Gentlemen, the spirit of human liberty and of free government, nurtured and grown into strength and beauty in America, has stretched its course into the midst of the nations. Like an emanation from Heaven, it has gone forth, and it will not return void. It must change, it is fast changing, the face of the earth. Our great, our high duty is to show, in our own example, that this spirit is a spirit of health as well as a spirit of power; that its benignity is as great as its strength; that its efficiency to secure individual rights, social relations, and moral order, is equal to the irresistible force with which it prostrates principalities and powers. The world, at this moment, is regarding us with a willing, but something of a fearful admiration. Its deep and awful anxiety is to learn whether free states may be stable, as well as free; whether popular power may be trusted, as well as feared; in short, whether wise, regular, and virtuous self-government is a vision for the contemplation of theorists, or a truth established, illustrated, and brought into practice in the country of Washington.

Gentlemen, for the earth which we inhabit, and the whole circle of the sun, for all the unborn races of mankind, we seem to hold in our hands, for their weal or woe, the fate of this experiment. If we fail, who shall venture the repetition? If our example shall prove to be one, not of encouragement, but of terror, not fit to be imitated, but fit only to be shunned, where else shall the world look for free models? If this great *Western Sun* be struck out of the firmament, at what other fountain shall the lamp of liberty hereafter be lighted? What other orb shall emit a ray to glimmer, even, on the darkness of the world?

There is no danger of our overrating or overstating the important part which we are now acting in human affairs. It should not flatter our personal self-respect, but it should reanimate our patriotic virtues, and inspire us with a deeper and more solemn sense, both of our privileges and of our duties. We cannot wish better for our country, nor for the world, than that the same spirit which influenced Washington may influence all who succeed him; and that the same blessing from above, which attended his efforts, may also attend theirs.

The principles of Washington's administration are not left

doubtful. They are to be found in the Constitution itself, in the great measures recommended and approved by him, in his speeches to Congress, and in that most interesting paper, his Farewell Address to the People of the United States. The success of the government under his administration is the highest proof of the soundness of these principles. And, after an experience of thirty-five years, what is there which an enemy could condemn? What is there which either his friends, or the friends of the country, could wish to have been otherwise? I speak, of course, of great measures and leading principles.

In the first place, all his measures were right in their intent. He stated the whole basis of his own great character, when he told the country, in the homely phrase of the proverb, that honesty is the best policy. One of the most striking things ever said of him is, that "*he changed mankind's ideas of political greatness.*"* To commanding talents, and to success, the common elements of such greatness, he added a disregard of self, a spotlessness of motive, a steady submission to every public and private duty, which threw far into the shade the whole crowd of vulgar great. The object of his regard was the whole country. No part of it was enough to fill his enlarged patriotism. His love of glory, so far as that may be supposed to have influenced him at all, spurned every thing short of general approbation. It would have been nothing to him, that his partisans or his favorites outnumbered, or outvoted, or outmanaged, or outclamored, those of other leaders. He had no favorites; he rejected all partisanship; and, acting honestly for the universal good, he deserved, what he has so richly enjoyed, the universal love.

His principle it was to act right, and to trust the people for support; his principle it was not to follow the lead of sinister and selfish ends, nor to rely on the little arts of party delusion to obtain public sanction for such a course. Born for his country and for the world, he did not give up to party what was meant for mankind. The consequence is, that his fame is as durable as his principles, as lasting as truth and virtue themselves. While the hundreds whom party excitement, and temporary circumstances, and casual combinations, have raised into transient notoriety, sink again, like thin bubbles, bursting and

* See Works of Fisher Ames, pp. 122, 123.

dissolving into the great ocean, Washington's fame is like the rock which bounds that ocean, and at whose feet its billows are destined to break harmlessly for ever.

The maxims upon which Washington conducted our foreign relations were few and simple. The first was an entire and indisputable impartiality towards foreign states. He adhered to this rule of public conduct, against very strong inducements to depart from it, and when the popularity of the moment seemed to favor such a departure. In the next place, he maintained true dignity and unsullied honor in all communications with foreign states. It was among the high duties devolved upon him, to introduce our new government into the circle of civilized states and powerful nations. Not arrogant or assuming, with no unbecoming or supercilious bearing, he yet exacted for it from all others entire and punctilious respect. He demanded, and he obtained at once, a standing of perfect equality for his country in the society of nations; nor was there a prince or potentate of his day, whose personal character carried with it, into the intercourse of other states, a greater degree of respect and veneration.

He regarded other nations only as they stood in political relations to us. With their internal affairs, their political parties and dissensions, he scrupulously abstained from all interference; and, on the other hand, he repelled with spirit all such interference by others with us or our concerns. His sternest rebuke, the most indignant measure of his whole administration, was aimed against such an attempted interference. He felt it as an attempt to wound the national honor, and resented it accordingly.

The reiterated admonitions in his Farewell Address show his deep fears that foreign influence would insinuate itself into our counsels through the channels of domestic dissension, and obtain a sympathy with our own temporary parties. Against all such dangers, he most earnestly entreats the country to guard itself. He appeals to its patriotism, to its self-respect, to its own honor, to every consideration connected with its welfare and happiness, to resist, at the very beginning, all tendencies towards such connection of foreign interests with our own affairs. With a tone of earnestness nowhere else found, even in his last affectionate farewell advice to his countrymen, he says, "Against

the insidious wiles of foreign influence, (I conjure you to believe me, fellow-citizens,) the jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake; since history and experience prove, that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican government."

Lastly, on the subject of foreign relations, Washington never forgot that we had interests peculiar to ourselves. The primary political concerns of Europe, he saw, did not affect us. We had nothing to do with her balance of power, her family compacts, or her successions to thrones. We were placed in a condition favorable to neutrality during European wars, and to the enjoyment of all the great advantages of that relation. "Why, then," he asks us, "why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice?"

Indeed, Gentlemen, Washington's Farewell Address is full of truths important at all times, and particularly deserving consideration at the present. With a sagacity which brought the future before him, and made it like the present, he saw and pointed out the dangers that even at this moment most imminently threaten us. I hardly know how a greater service of that kind could now be done to the community, than by a renewed and wide diffusion of that admirable paper, and an earnest invitation to every man in the country to peruse and consider it. Its political maxims are invaluable; its exhortations to love of country and to brotherly affection among citizens, touching; and the solemnity with which it urges the observance of moral duties, and impresses the power of religious obligation, gives to it the highest character of truly disinterested, sincere, parental advice.

The domestic policy of Washington found its pole-star in the avowed objects of the Constitution itself. He sought so to administer that Constitution, as to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty. These were objects interesting, in the highest degree, to the whole country, and his policy embraced the whole country.

Among his earliest and most important duties was the organization of the government itself, the choice of his confidential advisers, and the various appointments to office. This duty, so important and delicate, when a whole government was to be organized, and all its offices for the first time filled, was yet not difficult to him ; for he had no sinister ends to accomplish, no clamorous partisans to gratify, no pledges to redeem, no object to be regarded but simply the public good. It was a plain, straightforward matter, a mere honest choice of good men for the public service.

His own singleness of purpose, his disinterested patriotism, were evinced by the selection of his first cabinet, and by the manner in which he filled the seats of justice, and other places of high trust. He sought for men fit for offices ; not for offices which might suit men. Above personal considerations, above local considerations, above party considerations, he felt that he could only discharge the sacred trust which the country had placed in his hands, by a diligent inquiry after real merit, and a conscientious preference of virtue and talent. The whole country was the field of his selection. He explored that whole field, looking only for whatever it contained most worthy and distinguished. He was, indeed, most successful, and he deserved success for the purity of his motives, the liberality of his sentiments, and his enlarged and manly policy.

Washington's administration established the national credit, made provision for the public debt, and for that patriotic army whose interests and welfare were always so dear to him ; and, by laws wisely framed, and of admirable effect, raised the commerce and navigation of the country, almost at once, from depression and ruin to a state of prosperity. Nor were his eyes open to these interests alone. He viewed with equal concern its agriculture and manufactures, and, so far as they came within the regular exercise of the powers of this government, they experienced regard and favor.

It should not be omitted, even in this slight reference to the general measures and general principles of the first President, that he saw and felt the full value and importance of the judicial department of the government. An upright and able administration of the laws he held to be alike indispensable to private happiness and public liberty. The temple of justice, in his

The Resignation of Washington

From the Painting by John Trumbull, Yale School of
Fine Arts, New Haven

opinion, was a sacred place, and he would profane and pollute it who should call any to minister in it, not spotless in character, not incorruptible in integrity, not competent by talent and learning, not a fit object of unhesitating trust.

Among other admonitions, Washington has left us, in his last communication to his country, an exhortation against the excesses of party spirit. A fire not to be quenched, he yet conjures us not to fan and feed the flame. Undoubtedly, Gentlemen, it is the greatest danger of our system and of our time. Undoubtedly, if that system should be overthrown, it will be the work of excessive party spirit, acting on the government, which is dangerous enough, or acting *in* the government, which is a thousand times more dangerous; for government then becomes nothing but organized party, and, in the strange vicissitudes of human affairs, it may come at last, perhaps, to exhibit the singular paradox of government itself being in opposition to its own powers, at war with the very elements of its own existence. Such cases are hopeless. As men may be protected against murder, but cannot be guarded against suicide, so government may be shielded from the assaults of external foes, but nothing can save it when it chooses to lay violent hands on itself.

Finally, Gentlemen, there was in the breast of Washington one sentiment so deeply felt, so constantly uppermost, that no proper occasion escaped without its utterance. From the letter which he signed in behalf of the Convention when the Constitution was sent out to the people, to the moment when he put his hand to that last paper in which he addressed his countrymen, the Union,—the Union was the great object of his thoughts. In that first letter he tells them that, to him and his brethren of the Convention, union appears to be the greatest interest of every true American; and in that last paper he conjures them to regard that unity of government which constitutes them one people as the very palladium of their prosperity and safety, and the security of liberty itself. He regarded the union of these States less as one of our blessings, than as the great treasure-house which contained them all. Here, in his judgment, was the great magazine of all our means of prosperity; here, as he thought, and as every true American still thinks, are deposited all our animating prospects, all our solid hopes for future greatness.

He has taught us to maintain this union, not by seeking to enlarge the powers of the government, on the one hand, nor by surrendering them, on the other; but by an administration of them at once firm and moderate, pursuing objects truly national, and carried on in a spirit of justice and equity.

The extreme solicitude for the preservation of the Union, at all times manifested by him, shows not only the opinion he entertained of its importance, but his clear perception of those causes which were likely to spring up to endanger it, and which, if once they should overthrow the present system, would leave little hope of any future beneficial reunion. Of all the presumptions indulged by presumptuous man, that is one of the rashest which looks for repeated and favorable opportunities for the deliberate establishment of a united government over distinct and widely extended communities. Such a thing has happened once in human affairs, and but once; the event stands out as a prominent exception to all ordinary history; and unless we suppose ourselves running into an age of miracles, we may not expect its repetition.

Washington, therefore, could regard, and did regard, nothing as of paramount political interest, but the integrity of the Union itself. With a united government, well administered, he saw that we had nothing to fear; and without it, nothing to hope. The sentiment is just, and its momentous truth should solemnly impress the whole country. If we might regard our country as personated in the spirit of Washington, if we might consider him as representing her, in her past renown, her present prosperity, and her future career, and as in that character demanding of us all to account for our conduct, as political men or as private citizens, how should he answer him who has ventured to talk of disunion and dismemberment? Or how should he answer him who dwells perpetually on local interests, and fans every kindling flame of local prejudice? How should he answer him who would array State against State, interest against interest, and party against party, careless of the continuance of that *unity of government which constitutes us one people*?

The political prosperity which this country has attained, and which it now enjoys, has been acquired mainly through the instrumentality of the present government. While this agent continues, the capacity of attaining to still higher degrees of

prosperity exists also. We have, while this lasts, a political life capable of beneficial exertion, with power to resist or overcome misfortunes, to sustain us against the ordinary accidents of human affairs, and to promote, by active efforts, every public interest. But dismemberment strikes at the very being which preserves these faculties. It would lay its rude and ruthless hand on this great agent itself. It would sweep away, not only what we possess, but all power of regaining lost, or acquiring new possessions. It would leave the country, not only bereft of its prosperity and happiness, but without limbs, or organs, or faculties, by which to exert itself hereafter in the pursuit of that prosperity and happiness.

Other misfortunes may be borne, or their effects overcome. If disastrous war should sweep our commerce from the ocean, another generation may renew it; if it exhaust our treasury, future industry may replenish it; if it desolate and lay waste our fields, still, under a new cultivation, they will grow green again, and ripen to future harvests. It were but a trifle even if the walls of yonder Capitol were to crumble, if its lofty pillars should fall, and its gorgeous decorations be all covered by the dust of the valley. All these might be rebuilt. But who shall reconstruct the fabric of demolished government? Who shall rear again the well-proportioned columns of constitutional liberty? Who shall frame together the skilful architecture which unites national sovereignty with State rights, individual security, and public prosperity? No, if these columns fall, they will be raised not again. Like the Coliseum and the Parthenon, they will be destined to a mournful, a melancholy immortality. Bitterer tears, however, will flow over them, than were ever shed over the monuments of Roman or Grecian art; for they will be the remnants of a more glorious edifice than Greece or Rome ever saw, the edifice of constitutional American liberty.

But let us hope for better things. Let us trust in that gracious Being who has hitherto held our country as in the hollow of his hand. Let us trust to the virtue and the intelligence of the people, and to the efficacy of religious obligation. Let us trust to the influence of Washington's example. Let us hope that that fear of Heaven which expels all other fear, and that regard to duty which transcends all other regard, may influence public men and private citizens, and lead our country still on-

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ward in her happy career. Full of these gratifying anticipations and hopes, let us look forward to the end of that century which is now commenced. A hundred years hence, other disciples of Washington will celebrate his birth, with no less of sincere admiration than we now commemorate it. When they shall meet, as we now meet, to do themselves and him that honor, so surely as they shall see the blue summits of his native mountains rise in the horizon, so surely as they shall behold the river on whose banks he lived, and on whose banks he rests, still flowing on toward the sea, so surely may they see, as we now see, the flag of the Union floating on the top of the Capitol; and then, as now, may the sun in his course visit no land more free, more happy, more lovely, than this our own country!

Gentlemen, I propose — “THE MEMORY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON.”

From the excellent speeches delivered by gentlemen on this interesting occasion, we cannot refrain from selecting for this publication, though a little out of place, the appropriate, just, and classic remarks of Mr. Robbins.

Mr. Webster having retired, Mr. Chambers, being in the chair, called upon Mr. Robbins of Rhode Island; when Mr. Senator ROBBINS of that State addressed the company as follows: —

“GENTLEMEN, — I beg leave to offer a sentiment; but first, with your indulgence, will offer a few remarks, not inappropriate, I hope, to the occasion.

“It is the peculiar good fortune of this country to have given birth to a citizen, whose name everywhere produces a sentiment of regard for his country itself. In other countries, whenever or wherever this is spoken of to be praised, and with the highest praise, it is called the country of Washington. I believe there is no people, civilized or savage, in any place, however remote, where the name of Washington has not been heard, and where it is not repeated with the fondest admiration. We are told, that the Arab of the desert talks of Washington in his tent, and that his name is familiar to the wandering Scythian. He seems, indeed, to be the delight of human kind, as their beau ideal of human nature. ‘Nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale fatentes.’

“No American, in any part of the world, but has found the regard for

himself increased by his connection with Washington, as his fellow-countryman ; and who has not felt a pride, and had occasion to exult, in the fortunate connection ?

“ Half a century and more has now passed away since he came upon the stage, and his fame first broke upon the world ; for it broke like the blaze of day from the rising sun, — almost as sudden, and seemingly as universal. The eventful period since that era has teemed with great men, who have crossed the scene and passed off. Some of them have arrested great attention, very great ; still Washington retains his preëminent place in the minds of men, still his peerless name is cherished by them in the same freshness of delight as in the morn of its glory.

“ History will keep her record of his fame ; but history is not necessary to perpetuate it. In regions where history is not read, where letters are unknown, it lives, and will go down from age to age, in all future time, in their traditionary lore.

“ Who would exchange this fame, the common inheritance of our country, for the fame of any individual which any country of any time can boast ? I would not ; with my sentiments, I could not.

“ I recollect the first time I ever saw Washington : indeed, it is impossible I should forget it, or recollect it without the liveliest emotion. I was then a child at school. The school was dismissed, and we were told, that General Washington was expected in town that day, on his way to Cambridge, to take command of the American army. We, the children, were permitted to mingle with the people, who had assembled in mass to see him. I did see him ; I riveted my eyes upon him ; I could now, were I master of the pencil, delineate with exact truth his form and features, and every particular of his costume : so vivid are my recollections. I can never forget the feelings his sublime presence inspired. How often, afterwards, when I came, in my studies, to learn them, have I repeated and applied, as expressive of that feeling, these lines, —

“ *Quem sese ore ferens ! quam forti pectore et armis !*

Credo equidem, nec vana fides, genus esse Deorum.”

He did seem to me more than mortal. It is true this was young and ignorant enthusiasm ; but, though young and ignorant, it was not false ; it was enthusiasm, which my riper judgment has always recognized as just ; it was but the anticipated sentiment of the whole human kind.

“ I now beg leave to offer this sentiment : —

“ The written legacy of Washington to his countrymen, — a code of politics by which, and by which alone, as he believed, their union and their liberties can be made immortal.”

**National Republican Convention
at Worcester**

National Republican Convention at Worcester*

MR. PRESIDENT, — I offer no apology for addressing the meeting. Holding, by the favor of the people of this Commonwealth, an important public situation, I deem it no less than a part of my duty, at this interesting moment, to make known my opinions on the state of public affairs, and, however I may have performed other duties, this, at least, it is my purpose, on the present occasion, fully to discharge. Not intending to comment at length on all the subjects which now attract public attention, nor to discuss any thing in detail, I wish, nevertheless, before an assembly so large and respectable as the present, and through them before the whole people of the State, to lay open, without reserve, my own sentiments, hopes, and fears respecting the state and the prospects of our common country.

The resolutions which have been read from the chair express the opinion, that the public good requires an effectual change, in the administration of the general government, both of measures and of men. In this opinion I heartily concur.

Mr. President, there is no citizen of the State, who, in principle and by habitual sentiment, is less disposed than myself to general opposition to government, or less desirous of frequent changes in its administration. I entertain this feeling strongly, and at all times, towards the government of the United States; because I have ever regarded the Federal Constitution as a frame of government so peculiar, and so delicate in its relations to the State governments, that it might be in danger of overthrow, as well from an indiscriminate and wanton opposition, as

* A Speech delivered at the National Republican Convention held at Worcester, Mass., on the 12th of October, 1832, preparatory to the Annual Elections.

from a weak or a wicked administration. But a case may arise in which the government is no longer safe in the hands to which it has been intrusted. It may come to be a question, not so much in what particular manner, or according to what particular political opinions, the government shall be administered, as whether the Constitution itself shall be preserved and maintained. Now, Sir, in my judgment, just such a case and just such a question are at this moment before the American people. Entertaining this sentiment, and thoroughly and entirely convinced of its truth, I wish, as far as my humble power extends, to produce in the people a more earnest attention to their public concerns. With the people, and the people alone, lies any remedy for the past or any security for the future. No delegated power is equal to the exigency of the present crisis. No public servants, however able or faithful, have ability to check or to stop the fearful tendency of things. It is a case for sovereign interposition. The rescue, if it come at all, must come from that power which no other on earth can resist. I earnestly wish, therefore, unimportant as my own opinions may be, and entitled, as I know they are, to no considerable regard, yet, since they are honest and sincere, and since they respect nothing less than dangers which appear to me to threaten the government and Constitution of the country, I fervently wish that I could now make them known, not only to this meeting and to this State, but to every man in the Union. I take the hazard of the reputation of an alarmist; I cheerfully submit to the imputation of over-excited apprehension; I discard all fear of the cry of false prophecy, and I declare, that, in my judgment, not only the great interests of the country, but the Constitution itself, are in imminent peril, and that nothing can save either the one or the other but that voice which has authority to say to the evils of misrule and misgovernment, "Hitherto shall ye come, but no further."

It is true, Sir, that it is the natural effect of a good constitution to protect the people. But who shall protect the constitution? Who shall guard the guardian? What arm but the mighty arm of the people itself is able, in a popular government, to uphold public institutions? The constitution itself is but the creature of the public will; and in every crisis which threatens it, it must owe its security to the same power to which it owes its origin.

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The appeal, therefore, is to the people; not to party nor to partisans, not to professed politicians, not to those who have an interest in office and place greater than their stake in the country, but to the people, and the whole people; to those who, in regard to political affairs, have no wish but for a good government, and who have power to accomplish their own wishes.

Mr. President, are the principles and leading measures of the administration hostile to the great interests of the country?

Are they dangerous to the Constitution, and to the union of the States?

Is there any prospect of a beneficial change of principles and measures, without a change of men?

Is there reasonable ground to hope for such a change of men?

On these several questions, I desire to state my own convictions fully, though as briefly as possible.

As government is intended to be a practical institution, if it be wisely formed, the first and most natural test of its administration is the effect produced by it. Let us look, then, to the actual state of our affairs. Is it such as should follow a good administration of a good constitution?

Sir, we see one State openly threatening to arrest the execution of the revenue laws of the Union, by acts of her own. This proceeding is threatened, not by irresponsible persons, but by those who fill her chief places of power and trust.

In another State, free citizens of the country are imprisoned, and held in prison, in defiance of a judgment of the Supreme Court, pronounced for their deliverance. Immured in a dungeon, marked and patched as subjects of penitentiary punishment, these free citizens pass their days in counting the slow-revolving hours of their miserable captivity, and their nights in feverish and delusive dreams of their own homes and their own families; while the Constitution stands adjudged to be violated, a law of Congress is effectually repealed by the act of a State, and a judgment of deliverance by the Supreme Court is set at naught and contemned.*

Treaties, importing the most solemn and sacred obligations, are denied to have binding force.

* See page 119, *infra*.

A feeling that there is great insecurity for property, and the stability of the means of living, extensively prevails.

The whole subject of the tariff, acted on for the moment, is at the same moment declared not to be at rest, but liable to be again moved, and with greater effect, just so soon as power for that purpose shall be obtained.

The currency of the country, hitherto safe, sound, and universally satisfactory, is threatened with a violent change; and an embarrassment in pecuniary affairs, equally distressing and unnecessary, hangs over all the trading and active classes of society.

A long-used and long-approved legislative instrument for the collection of revenue, well secured against abuse, and always responsible to Congress and to the laws, is denied further existence; and its place is proposed to be supplied by a new branch of the executive department, with a money power controlled and conducted solely by executive agency.

The power of the Veto is exercised, not as an extraordinary, but as an ordinary power; as a common mode of defeating acts of Congress not acceptable to the executive. We hear, one day, that the President needs the advice of no cabinet; that a few secretaries, or clerks, are enough for him. The next, we are informed that the Supreme Court is but an obstacle to the popular will, and the whole judicial department but an encumbrance to government. And while, on one side, the judicial power is thus derided and denounced, on the other arises the cry, "Cut down the Senate!" and over the whole, at the same time, prevails the loud avowal, shouted with all the lungs of conscious party strength and party triumph, that the spoils of the enemy belong to the victors. This condition of things, Sir, this general and obvious aspect of affairs, is the result of three years' administration, such as the country has experienced.

But, not resting on this general view of results, let me inquire what the principles and policy of the administration are, on the leading interests of the country, subordinate to the Constitution itself. And first, what are its principles, and what its policy, respecting the tariff? Is this great question settled, or unsettled? And is the present administration for, or against, the tariff?

Sir, the question is wholly unsettled, and the principles of the administration, according to its most recent avowal of those

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principles, are adverse to the protective policy, decidedly hostile to the whole system, root and branch; and this on permanent and alleged constitutional grounds.

In the first place, nothing has been done to settle the tariff question. The anti-tariff members of Congress who voted for the late law have, none of them, said they would adhere to it. On the contrary, they supported it, because, as far as it went, it was reduction, and that was what they wished; and if they obtained this degree of reduction now, it would be easier to obtain a greater degree hereafter; and they frankly declared, that their intent and purpose was to insist on reduction, and to pursue reduction, unremittingly, till all duties on imports should be brought down to one general and equal percentage, and that regulated by the mere wants of the revenue; or, if different rates of duty should remain on different articles, still, that the whole should be laid for revenue, and revenue only; and that they would, to the utmost of their power, push this course, till protection by duties, as a special object of national policy, should be abandoned altogether in the national councils. It is a delusion, therefore, Sir, to imagine that the present tariff stands, safely, on conceded ground. It covers not an inch that has not been fought for, and must not be again fought for. It stands while its friends can protect it, and not an hour longer.

In the next place, in that compend of executive opinion contained in the veto message, the whole principle of the protective policy is plainly and pointedly denounced.

Having gone through its argument against the bank charter, as it now exists, and as it has existed, either under the present or a former law, for near forty years, and having added to the well-doubted logic of that argument the still more doubtful aid of a large array of opprobrious epithets, the message, in unveiled allusion to the protective policy of the country, holds this language:—

“Most of the difficulties our government now encounters, and most of the dangers which impend over our Union, have sprung from an abandonment of the legitimate objects of government by our national legislation, and the adoption of such principles as are embodied in this act. Many of our rich men have not been content with equal protection and equal benefits, but have besought us to make them richer by act of Congress. By attempting to gratify their desires, we have, in the results of

our legislation, arrayed section against section, interest against interest, and man against man, in a fearful commotion which threatens to shake the foundations of our Union. It is time to pause in our career, to review our principles, and, if possible, revive that devoted patriotism and spirit of compromise which distinguished the sages of the Revolution and the fathers of our Union. If we cannot at once, in justice to interests vested under improvident legislation, make our government what it ought to be, we can at least take a stand against all new grants of monopolies and exclusive privileges, against any prostitution of our government to the advancement of the few at the expense of the many, and in favor of compromise and gradual reform in our code of laws and system of political economy."

Here, then, we have the whole creed. Our national legislature has abandoned the legitimate objects of government. It has adopted such principles as are embodied in the bank charter; and these principles are elsewhere called objectionable, odious, and unconstitutional. All this has been done, because rich men have besought the government to render them richer by acts of Congress. It is time to pause in our career. It is time *to review these principles*. And if we cannot at once MAKE OUR GOVERNMENT WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE, we can, at least, take a stand against new grants of power and privilege.

The plain meaning of all this is, that our protecting laws are founded in an abandonment of the legitimate objects of government; that this is the great source of our difficulties; that it is time to stop in our career, to review the principles of these laws, and, as soon as we can, MAKE OUR GOVERNMENT WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE.

No one can question, Mr. President, that these paragraphs, from the last official publication of the President, show that, *in his opinion, the tariff, as a system designed for protection, is not only impolitic, but unconstitutional also*. They are quite incapable of any other version or interpretation. They defy all explanation, and all glosses.

Sir, however we may differ from the principles or the policy of the administration, it would, nevertheless, somewhat satisfy our pride of country, if we could ascribe to it the character of consistency. It would be grateful if we could contemplate the President of the United States as an identical idea. But even this secondary pleasure is denied to us. In looking to the pub-

lished records of executive opinions, sentiments favorable to protection and sentiments against protection either come confusedly before us, at the same moment, or else follow each other in rapid succession, like the shadows of a phantasmagoria.

Having read an extract from the veto message, containing the statement of *present opinions*, allow me to read another extract from the annual message of 1830. It will be perceived, that in that message both the clear constitutionality of the tariff laws, and their indispensable policy, are maintained in the fullest and strongest manner. The argument on the constitutional point is stated with more than common ability; and the policy of the laws is affirmed in terms importing the deepest and most settled conviction. We hear in this message nothing of improvident legislation; nothing of the abandonment of the legitimate objects of government; nothing of the necessity of pausing in our career and reviewing our principles; nothing of the necessity of changing our government, *till it shall be made what it ought to be*. But let the message speak for itself.

“The power to impose duties on imports originally belonged to the several States. The right to adjust those duties with a view to the encouragement of domestic branches of industry is so completely incidental to that power, that it is difficult to suppose the existence of the one without the other. The States have delegated their whole authority over imports to the general government, without limitation or restriction, saving the very inconsiderable reservation relating to their inspection laws. This authority having thus entirely passed from the States, the right to exercise it for the purpose of protection does not exist in them; and consequently, if it be not possessed by the general government, it must be extinct. Our political system would thus present the anomaly of a people stripped of the right to foster their own industry, and to counteract the most selfish and destructive policy which might be adopted by foreign nations. This surely cannot be the case; this indispensable power, thus surrendered by the States, must be within the scope of the authority on the subject expressly delegated to Congress.

“In this conclusion I am confirmed, as well by the opinions of Presidents Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, who have each repeatedly recommended the exercise of this right under the Constitution, as by the uniform practice of Congress, the continued acquiescence of the States, and the general understanding of the people.

“I am well aware that this is a subject of so much delicacy, on account of the extended interests it involves, as to require that it should be touched

with the utmost caution ; and that, while an abandonment of the policy in which it originated, a policy coeval with our government, pursued through successive administrations, is neither to be expected nor desired, the people have a right to demand, and have demanded, that it be so modified as to correct abuses and obviate injustice."

Mr. President, no one needs to point out inconsistencies plain and striking as these. The message of 1830 is a well-written paper ; it proceeded, probably, from the cabinet proper. Whence the veto message of 1832 proceeded, I know not ; perhaps from the cabinet improper.

But, Sir, there is an important record of an earlier date than 1830. If, as the President avers, we have been guilty of improvident legislation, what act of Congress is the most striking instance of that improvidence ? Certainly it is the act of 1824. The principle of protection, repeatedly recognized before that time, was, by that act, carried to a new and great extent ; so new and so great, that the act was considered as the foundation of the system. That law it was which conferred on the distinguished citizen, whose nomination for President this meeting has received with so much enthusiasm, (Mr. Clay,) the appellation of the "Author of the American System." Accordingly, the act of 1824 has been the particular object of attack, in all the warfare waged against the protective policy. If Congress ever abandoned legitimate objects of legislation in favor of protection, it did so by that law. If any laws now on the statute-book, or which ever were there, show, by their character as laws of protection, that our government is not what it ought to be, and that it ought to be altered, and, in the language of the veto message, *made* what it ought to be, the law of 1824 is the very law which, more than any and more than all others, makes good that assertion. And yet, Sir, the President of the United States, then a Senator in Congress, voted for that law ! And, though I have not recurred to the journal, my recollection is, that, as to some of its provisions, his support was essential to their success. It will be found, I think, that some of its enactments, and those now most loudly complained of, would have failed, but for his own personal support of them by his own vote.

After all this, it might have been hoped that there would be, in 1832, some tolerance of opinion toward those who cannot

think that improvidence, abandonment of all the legitimate objects of legislation, a desire to gratify the rich, who have besought Congress to make them still richer, and the adoption of principles unequal, oppressive, and odious, are the true characteristics to be ascribed to the system of protection.

But, Sir, it is but a small part of my object to show inconsistencies in executive opinions. My main purpose is different, and tends to more practical ends. It is, to call the attention of the meeting, and of the people, to the principles avowed in the late message as being the President's *present opinions*, and proofs of *his present purposes*, and to the consequences, if they shall be maintained by the country. These principles are there expressed in language which needs no commentary. They go, with a point-blank aim, against the fundamental stone of the protective system; that is to say, against the constitutional power of Congress to establish and maintain that system, in whole or in part. The question, therefore, of the tariff, the question of every tariff, the question between maintaining our agricultural and manufacturing interests where they now are, and breaking up the entire system, and erasing every vestige of it from the statute-book, is a question materially to be affected by the pending election.

The President has exercised his NEGATIVE power on the law for continuing the bank charter. Here, too, he denies both the constitutionality and the policy of an existing law of the land. It is true that the law, or a similar one, has been in operation nearly forty years. Previous Presidents and previous Congresses have, all along, sanctioned and upheld it. The highest courts, and indeed all the courts, have pronounced it constitutional. A majority of the people, greater than exists on almost any other question, agrees with all the Presidents, all the Congresses, and all the courts of law. Yet, against all this weight of authority, the President puts forth his own individual opinion, and has negatived the bill for continuing the law. Which of the members of his administration, or whether any one of them, concur in his sentiments, we know not. Some of them, we know, have recently advanced precisely the opposite opinions, and in the strongest manner recommended to Congress the continuation of the bank charter. Having himself urgently and repeatedly

called the attention of Congress to the subject, and his Secretary of the Treasury — who, and all the other secretaries, as the President's friends say, are but so many pens in his hand — having, in his communication to Congress, at this very session, insisted both on the constitutionality and necessity of the bank, the President nevertheless saw fit to negative the bill, passed, as it had been, by strong majorities in both Houses, and passed, without doubt or question, in compliance with the wishes of a vast majority of the American people.

The question respecting the constitutional power of Congress to establish a bank, I shall not here discuss. On that, as well as on the general expediency of renewing the charter, my opinions have been elsewhere expressed. They are before the public, and the experience of every day confirms me in their truth. All that has been said of the embarrassment and distress which will be felt from discontinuing the bank falls far short of an adequate representation. What was prophecy only two months ago is already history.

In this part of the country, indeed, we experience this distress and embarrassment in a mitigated degree. The loans of the bank are not so highly important, or at least not so absolutely necessary, to the present operations of our commerce; yet we ourselves have a deep interest in the subject, as it is connected with the general currency of the country, and with the cheapness and facility of exchange.

The country, generally speaking, was well satisfied with the bank. Why not let it alone? No evil had been felt from it in thirty-six years. Why conjure up a troop of fancied mischiefs, as a pretence to put it down? The message struggles to excite prejudices, from the circumstance that foreigners are stockholders; and on this ground it raises a loud cry against a moneyed aristocracy. Can any thing, Sir, be conceived more inconsistent than this? any thing more remote from sound policy and good statesmanship? In the United States the rate of interest is high, compared with the rates abroad. In Holland and England, the actual value of money is no more than three, or perhaps three and a half, per cent. In our Atlantic States, it is as high as five or six, taking the whole length of the seaboard; in the Northwestern States, it is eight or ten, and in the Southwestern ten or twelve. If the introduction, then, of foreign cap-

ital be discountenanced and discouraged, the American money-lender may fix his own rate anywhere from five to twelve per cent. per annum. On the other hand, if the introduction of foreign capital be countenanced and encouraged, its effect is to keep down the rate of interest, and to bring the value of money in the United States so much the nearer to its value in older and richer countries. Every dollar brought from abroad, and put into the mass of active capital at home, by so much diminishes the rate of interest; and by so much, therefore, benefits all the active and trading classes of society, at the expense of the American capitalist. Yet the President's invention, for such it deserves to be called, that which is to secure us against the possibility of being oppressed by a moneyed aristocracy, is to shut the door and bar it safely against all introduction of foreign capital!

Mr. President, what is it that has made England a sort of general banker for the civilized world? Why is it that capital from all quarters of the globe accumulates at the centre of her empire, and is thence again distributed? Doubtless, Sir, it is because she invites it, and solicits it. She sees the advantage of this; and no British minister ever yet did a thing so rash, so inconsiderate, so startling, as to exhibit a groundless feeling of dissatisfaction at the introduction or employment of foreign capital.

Sir, of all the classes of society, the larger stockholders of the bank are among those least likely to suffer from its discontinuance. There are, indeed, on the list of stockholders many charitable institutions, many widows and orphans, holding small amounts. To these, and other proprietors of a like character, the breaking up of the bank will, no doubt, be seriously inconvenient. But the capitalist, he who has invested money in the bank merely for the sake of the security and the interest, has nothing to fear. The refusal to renew the charter will, it is true, diminish the value of the stock; but, then, the same refusal will create a scarcity of money; and this will reduce the price of all other stocks; so that the stockholders in the bank, receiving, on its dissolution, their portion respectively of its capital, will have opportunities of new and advantageous investment.

The truth is, Sir, the great loss, the sore embarrassment, the

severe distress, arising from this Veto, will fall on the public, and especially on the more active and industrious portion of the public. It will inevitably create a scarcity of money; in the Western States, it will most materially depress the value of property; it will greatly enhance, everywhere, the price of domestic exchange; it threatens, everywhere, fluctuations of the currency; and it drives all our well-settled and safe operations of revenue and finance out of their accustomed channels. All this is to be suffered on the pretended ground of a constitutional scruple, which no respect for the opinion of others, no deference to legislative precedent, no decent regard to judicial decision, no homage to public opinion, expressed and maintained for forty years, have power to overcome. An idle apprehension of danger is set up against the experience of almost half a century; loose and flimsy theories are asserted against facts of general notoriety; and arguments are urged against continuing the charter, so superficial and frivolous, and yet so evidently addressed to those of the community who have never had occasion to be conversant with subjects of this sort, that an intelligent reader, who wishes to avoid imputing obliquity of motive, is obliged to content himself with ascribing to the source of the message, whatever and wherever that source may have been, no very distinguished share of the endowments of intellect.

Mr. President, as early as December, 1829, the President called the attention of Congress to the subject of the bank, in the most earnest manner. Look to his annual message of that date. You will find that he then felt constrained, by an irresistible sense of duty to the various interests concerned, not to delay beyond that moment his urgent invitation to Congress to take up the subject. He brought forward the same topic again, in all his subsequent annual messages; yet when Congress *did* act upon it, and, on the fourth of July, EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-TWO, *did* send him a bill, he returned it with his objections; and among these objections, he not only complained *that the executive was not consulted on the propriety of present action*, but affirmed also, in so many words, *that present action was deemed premature by the executive department*.

Let me ask, Mr. President, if it be possible that the same President, the same chief magistrate, the same mind, could have composed these two messages? Certainly they much

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more resemble the production of *two* minds, holding, on this point, precisely opposite opinions. The message of December, 1829, asserts that the time had *then* come for Congress to consider the bank subject; the message of 1832 declares, that, even then, the action of Congress on the same subject was *premature*; and both these messages were sent to Congress by the President of the United States. Sir, I leave these two messages to be compared and considered by the people.

Mr. President, I will here take notice of but one other suggestion of the President, relative to the time and manner of passing the late bill. A decent respect for the legislature of the country has hitherto been observed by all who have had occasion to hold official intercourse with it, and especially by all other branches of the government. The purity of the motives of Congress, in regard to any measure, has never been assailed from any respectable quarter. But in the veto message there is one expression, which, as it seems to me, no American can read without some feeling. There is an expression, evidently not casual or accidental, but inserted with design and composed with care, which does carry a direct imputation of the possibility of the effect of *private interest* and *private influence* on the deliberations of the two Houses of Congress. I quote the passage, and shall leave it without a single remark:—“Whatever interest or influence, whether public or private, has given birth to this act, it cannot be found either in the wishes or necessities of the executive department, by which present action is deemed premature.”

Among the great interests of the country, Mr. President, there is one which appears to me not to have attracted from the people of this Commonwealth a degree of attention altogether equal to its magnitude. I mean the public lands.

If we run our eye over the map of the country, and view the regions, almost boundless, which now constitute the public domain, and over which an active population is rapidly spreading itself, and if we recollect the amount of annual revenue derived from this source, we shall hardly fail to be convinced that few branches of national interest are of more extensive and lasting importance. So large a territory, belonging to the public, forms a subject of national concern of a

very delicate nature, especially in popular governments. We know, in the history of other countries, with what views and designs the public lands have been granted. Either in the form of gifts and largesses, or in that of reduction of prices to amounts merely nominal, or as compensation for services, real or imagined, the public domain, in other countries and other times, has not only been diverted from its just use and destination, but has been the occasion, also, of introducing into the state and into the public counsels no small portion both of distraction and corruption.

Happily, our own system of administering this great interest has hitherto been both safe and successful. Nothing under the government has been better devised than our land system; and nothing, thus far, more beneficially conducted. But the time seems to have arrived, in the progress of our growth and prosperity, when it has become necessary to reflect, not on any new mode of sale, for that can hardly be improved, but on some disposition of the proceeds such as shall be just and equal to the whole country, and shall insure also a constant and vigilant attention to this important subject from the people of all the States. It is not to be denied or disguised, that sentiments have recently sprung up, in some places, of a very extraordinary character, respecting the ownership, the just proprietary interest, in these lands. The lands are well known to have been obtained by the United States, either by grants from individual States, or by treaties with foreign powers. In both cases, and in all cases, the grants and cessions were to the United States, for the interest of the whole Union; and the grants from individual States contain express limitations and conditions, binding up the whole property to the common use of all the States for ever. Yet, of late years, an idea has been suggested, indeed seriously advanced, *that these lands, of right, belong to the States respectively in which they happen to lie.* This doctrine, Sir, which, I perceive, strikes this assembly as being somewhat extravagant, is founded on an argument derived, as is supposed, from the nature of State sovereignty. It has been openly espoused, by candidates for office, in some of the new States, and, indeed, has been announced in the Senate of the United States.

To the credit of the country, it should be stated, that, up to

the present moment, these notions have not spread widely; and they will be repudiated, undoubtedly, by the power of general opinion, so soon as that opinion shall be awakened and expressed. But there is another tendency more likely, perhaps, to run to injurious excess; and that is, a constant effort to reduce the price of land to sums almost nominal, on the ground of facilitating settlement. The sound policy of the government has been, uniformly, to keep the prices of the public lands low; so low that every actual settler might easily obtain a farm; but yet not so low as to tempt individual capitalists to buy up large quantities to hold for speculation. The object has been to meet, at all times, the whole actual demand, at a cheap rate; and this object has been attained. It is obviously of the greatest importance to keep the prices of the public lands from all influences, except the single one of the desire of supplying the whole actual demand at a cheap rate. The present minimum price is one dollar and a quarter per acre; and millions of acres of land, much of it of an excellent quality, are now in the market at this rate. Yet every year there are propositions to reduce the price, and propositions to graduate the price; that is to say, to provide that all lands having been offered for sale for a certain length of time at the established rate, if not then sold, shall be offered at a less rate; and again reduced, if not sold, to one still less. I have myself thought, that, in some of the oldest districts, some mode might usefully be adopted of disposing of the remainder of the unsold lands, and closing the offices; but a universal system of graduation, lowering prices at short intervals, and by large degrees, could have no other effect than a general depression of price in regard to the whole mass, and would evidently be great mismanagement of the public property. This convention, Sir, will think it singular enough, that a reduction of prices of the public lands should have been demanded on the ground *that other impositions for revenue, such as the duty on tea and coffee, have been removed*; thus considering and treating the sums received for lands sold as a *tax*, a *burden*, an *imposition*, and a great *drain* on the means and the industry of the new States. A man goes from New England to one of the Western States, buys a hundred acres of the best land in the world for one hundred and twenty-five dollars, pays his money, and receives an indisputable title; and immediately some one stands

up in Congress to call this operation the laying of a *tax*, the imposition of a *burden*; and the whole of these purchases and payments, taken together, are represented as an intolerable *drain* on the money and the industry of the new States. I know not, Sir, which deserves to pass for the original, and which for the copy; but this reasoning is not unlike that which maintains that the trading community of the West will be exhausted and ruined by the privilege of borrowing money of the Bank of the United States at six per cent. interest; this interest being, as is said in the veto message, a burden upon their industry, and a drain of their currency, which no country can bear without inconvenience and distress!

It was in a forced connection with the reduction of duties of impost, that the subject of the public lands was referred to the Committee of Manufactures in the Senate, at the late session of Congress. This was a legislative movement, calculated to throw on Mr. Clay, who was acting a leading part on the subject of the tariff and the reduction of duties, a new and delicate responsibility. From this responsibility, however, Mr. Clay did not shrink. He took up the subject, and his report upon it, and his speech delivered afterwards in defence of the report, are, in my opinion, among the very ablest of the efforts which have distinguished his long public life. I desire to commend their perusal to every citizen of Massachusetts. They will show him the deep interest of all the States, his own among the rest, in the security, and proper management, and disposal, of the public domain. Founded on the report of the committee, Mr. Clay introduced a bill, providing for the distribution among all the States, according to population, of the proceeds of the sales of the public lands for five years, first making a deduction of a considerable percentage in favor of the new States; the sums thus received by the States to be disposed of by them in favor of education, internal improvement, or colonization, as each State might choose for itself. This bill passed the Senate. It was vigorously opposed in the House of Representatives by the main body of the friends of the administration, and finally lost by a small majority. By the provisions of the bill, Massachusetts would have received, as her dividend, at the present average rate of sales, one hundred and thirty-seven thousand dollars a year.

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I am free to confess, Sir, that I had hoped to see some unobjectionable way of disposing of this subject, with the observance of justice towards all the States, by the government of the United States itself, without a distribution through the intervention of the State governments. Such a way, however, I have not discovered. I therefore voted for the bill of the last session.

Mr. President, let me remind the meeting of the great extent of this public property.

Only twenty millions of acres have been as yet sold, from the commencement of the government. One hundred and twenty millions, or about that quantity, are now cleared from the Indian title, surveyed into townships, ranges, and sections, and ready in the market for sale. I think, Sir, the whole surface of Massachusetts embraces about six millions of acres; so that the United States have a body of land, now surveyed and in market, equal to twenty States, each of the size of Massachusetts. But this is but a very small portion of the whole domain, much the greater part being yet unsurveyed, and much, too, subject to the original Indian title. The present income to the treasury from the sales of land is estimated at three millions of dollars a year. The meeting will thus see, Sir, how important a subject this is, and how highly it becomes the country to guard this vast property against perversion and bad management.

Mr. President, among the bills which failed, at the last session, for want of the President's approval, was one in which this State had a great pecuniary interest. It was the bill for the payment of interest to the States on the funds advanced by them during the war, the principal of which had been paid, or assumed, by the government of the United States. Some sessions ago, a bill was introduced into the Senate by my worthy colleague, and passed into a law, for paying a large part of the principal sum advanced by Massachusetts for militia expenses for defence of the country. This has been paid. The residue of the claim is in the proper course of examination; and such parts of it as ought to be allowed will doubtless be paid hereafter, *vetos* being out of the way, be it always understood. In the late bill, it was proposed that *interest* should be paid to the States on these advances, in cases where it had not been already paid. It passed both Houses. I recollect no opposition to it in the Sen-

ate, nor do I remember to have heard of any considerable objection in the House of Representatives. The argument for it lay in its own obvious justice ; a justice too apparent, as it seems to me, to be denied by any one. I left Congress, Sir, a day or two before its adjournment, and, meeting some friends in this village on my way home, we exchanged congratulations on this additional act of justice thus rendered to Massachusetts, as well as other States. But I had hardly reached Framingham, before I learned that our congratulations were premature. The President's signature had been refused, and the bill was not a law ! The only reason which I have ever heard for this refusal is, that Congress had not been in the practice of allowing interest on claims. This is not true, as a universal rule ; but if it were, might not Congress be trusted with the maintenance of its own rules ? Might it not make exceptions to them for good cause ? There is no doubt that, in regard to old and long-neglected claims, it has been customary not to allow interest ; but the Massachusetts claim was not of this character, nor were the claims of other States. None of them had remained unpaid for want of presentment. The executive and legislature of this Commonwealth have never omitted to press her demand for justice, and her delegates in Congress have endeavored to discharge their duty by supporting that demand. It has been already decided, in repeated instances, as well in regard to States as to individuals, that when money has been actually *borrowed*, for objects for which the general government ought to provide, interest paid on such *borrowed money* shall be refunded by the United States. Now, Sir, would it not be a distinction without a difference to allow interest in such a case, and yet refuse it in another, in which the State had not borrowed the money, and paid interest for it, but had raised it by taxation, or, as I believe was the case with Massachusetts, by the sale of valuable stocks, *bearing interest* ? Is it not apparent, that, in her case, as clearly as in that of a *borrowing* State, she has actually *lost* the interest ? Can any man maintain that between these two cases there is any sound distinction, in law, in equity, or in morals ? The refusal to sign this bill has deprived Massachusetts and Maine of a very large sum of money, justly due to them. It is now fifteen or sixteen years since the money was advanced ; and it was advanced for the most necessary and praiseworthy public

purposes. The interest on the sum already refunded, and on that which may reasonably be expected to be hereafter refunded, is not less than *five hundred thousand dollars*. But for the President's refusal, in this unusual mode, to give his approbation to a bill which had passed Congress almost unanimously, these two States would already have been in the receipt of a very considerable portion of this money, and the residue, to be received in due season, would have been made sure to them.

Mr. President, I do not desire to raise mere pecuniary interests to an undue importance in political matters. I admit there are principles and objects of paramount obligation and importance. I would not oppose the President merely because he has refused to the State what I thought her entitled to, in a matter of money, provided he had made known his reasons, and they had appeared to be such as might fairly influence an intelligent and honest mind. But in a matter of such great and direct importance to a State, where the justice of the case is so plain, that men agree in it who agree in hardly any thing else, where her claim has passed Congress without considerable opposition in either House, a refusal to approve the bill without giving the slightest reason, the taking advantage of the rising of Congress to give it a silent go-by, is an act that may well awaken the attention of the people in the States concerned. It is an act requiring close examination. It is an act which calls loudly for justification by its author. And now, Sir, I will close what I have to say on this particular subject by stating, that, on the 22d of March, 1832, the President did actually approve and sign a bill, in favor of South Carolina, by which it was enacted that her claim *for interest upon money actually expended* by her for military stores during the late war should be settled and paid; *the money so expended having been drawn by the State from a fund upon which she was receiving interest*. This was precisely the case of Massachusetts.

Mr. President, I now approach an inquiry of a far deeper and more affecting interest. Are the principles and measures of the administration dangerous to the Constitution and to the union of the States? Sir, I believe them to be so, and I shall state the grounds of that belief.

In the first place, any administration is dangerous to the

Constitution and to the union of the States, which denies the essential powers of the Constitution, and thus strips it of the capacity to do the good intended by it.

The principles embraced by the administration, and expressed in the veto message, are evidently hostile to the whole system of protection by duties of impost, *on constitutional grounds*. Here, then, is *one* great power struck at once out of the Constitution, and one great end of its adoption defeated. And while this power is thus struck out of the Constitution, it is clear that it exists nowhere else, since the Constitution expressly takes it away from all the States.

The veto message denies the constitutional power of creating or continuing such an institution as our whole experience has approved, for maintaining a sound, uniform, national currency, and for the safe collection of revenue. Here is *another* power, long used, and now lopped off. And *this* power, too, thus lopped off from the Constitution, is evidently not within the power of any of the individual States. No State can maintain a national currency; no State institution can render to the revenue the services performed by a national institution.

The principles of the administration are hostile to internal improvements. Here is another power, heretofore exercised in many instances, now denied. The administration denies the power, except with qualifications which cast an air of ridicule over the whole subject; being founded on such distinctions as between salt water and fresh water, places above custom-houses and places below, and others equally extraordinary.

Now, Sir, in all these respects, as well as in others, I think the principles of the administration are at war with the true principles of the Constitution; and that, by the zeal and industry which it exerts to support its own principles, it does daily weaken the Constitution, and does put in doubt its long continuance. The inroad of to-day opens the way for an easier inroad to-morrow. When any one essential part is rent away, or, what is nearer the truth, when many essential parts are rent away, who is there to tell us *how long any other part is to remain?*

Sir, our condition is singularly paradoxical. We have an administration opposed to the Constitution; we have an opposition which is the main support of the government and the

laws. We have an administration denying to the very government which it administers powers that have been exercised for forty years; it denies the protective power, the bank power, and the power of internal improvement. The great and leading measures of the national legislature are all resisted by it. These, strange as it may seem, depend on the *opposition* for support. We have, in truth, an opposition, without which it would be difficult for the government to get along at all. I appeal to every member of Congress present, (and I am happy to see many here,) to say what would now become of the government, if all the members of the opposition were withdrawn from Congress. For myself, I declare my own conviction that its continuance would probably be very short. Take away the opposition from Congress, and let us see what would probably be done, the first session. The TARIFF would be entirely *repealed*. Every enactment having protection by duties as its main object would be struck from the statute-book. This would be the first thing done. Every work of internal improvement would be stopped. This would follow, as matter of course. The bank would go down, and a *treasury money agency* would take its place. The Judiciary Act of 1789 would be repealed, so that the Supreme Court should exercise no power of revision over State decisions. And who would resist the doctrines of NULLIFICATION? Look, Sir, to the votes of Congress for the last three years, and you will see that each of these things would, in all human probability, take place at the next session, if the opposition were to be withdrawn. The Constitution is threatened, therefore, imminently threatened, by the very fact that those intrusted with its administration are hostile to its essential powers.

But, Sir, in my opinion, a yet greater danger threatens the Constitution and the government; and that is from the attempt *to extend the power of the executive at the expense of all the other branches of the government, and of the people themselves*. Whatever accustomed power is denied to the Constitution, whatever accustomed power is denied to Congress, or to the judiciary, *none is denied to the executive*. Here there is no retrenchment; here no apprehension is felt for the liberties of the people; here it is not thought necessary to erect barriers against corruption.

I begin, Sir, with the subject of removals from office for opinion's sake, one of the most signal instances, as I think, of the attempt to extend executive power. This has been a leading measure, a cardinal point, in the course of the administration. It has proceeded, from the first, on a settled proscription for political opinions; and this system it has carried into operation to the full extent of its ability. The President has not only filled all vacancies with his own friends, generally those most distinguished as personal partisans, but he has turned out political opponents, and thus created vacancies, in order that he might fill them with his own friends. I think the number of removals and appointments is said to be *two thousand*. While the administration and its friends have been attempting to circumscribe and to decry the powers belonging to other branches, it has thus seized into its own hands a patronage most pernicious and corrupting, an authority over men's means of living most tyrannical and odious, and a power to punish free men for political opinions altogether intolerable.

You will remember, Sir, that the Constitution says not one word about the President's power of removal from office. It is a power raised entirely by construction. It is a constructive power, introduced at first to meet cases of extreme public necessity. It has now become coextensive with the executive will, calling for no necessity, requiring no exigency for its exercise; to be employed at all times, without control, without question, without responsibility. When the question of the President's power of removal was debated in the first Congress, those who argued for it limited it to *extreme cases*. Cases, they said, might arise, in which it would be *absolutely necessary* to remove an officer before the Senate could be assembled. An officer might become insane; he might abscond; and from these and other supposable cases, it was said, the public service might materially suffer if the President could not remove the incumbent. And it was further said, that there was little or no danger of the abuse of the power for party or personal objects. No President, it was thought, would ever commit such an outrage on public opinion. Mr. Madison, who thought the power ought to exist, and to be exercised in cases of high necessity, declared, nevertheless, that if a President should resort to the power when not required by any public exigency, and merely for personal

objects, *he would deserve to be impeached*. By a very small majority, — I think, in the Senate, by the casting vote of the Vice-President, — Congress decided in favor of the existence of the power of removal, upon the grounds which I have mentioned; granting the power in a case of clear and absolute necessity, and denying its existence everywhere else.

Mr. President, we should recollect that this question was discussed, and thus decided, when Washington was in the executive chair. Men knew that in his hands the power would not be abused; nor did they conceive it possible that any of his successors could so far depart from his great and bright example, as, by abuse of the power, and by carrying that abuse to its utmost extent, to change the essential character of the executive from that of an impartial guardian and executor of the laws into that of the chief dispenser of party rewards. Three or four instances of removal occurred in the first twelve years of the government. At the commencement of Mr. Jefferson's administration, he made several others, not without producing much dissatisfaction; so much so, that he thought it expedient to give reasons to the people, in a public paper, for even the limited extent to which he had exercised the power. He rested his justification on particular circumstances and peculiar grounds; which, whether substantial or not, showed, at least, that he did not regard the power of removal as an ordinary power, still less as a mere arbitrary one, to be used as he pleased, for whatever ends he pleased, and without responsibility. As far as I remember, Sir, after the early part of Mr. Jefferson's administration, hardly an instance occurred for near thirty years. If there were any instances, they were few. But at the commencement of the present administration, the precedent of these previous cases was seized on, and a *system*, a regular *plan of government*, a well-considered scheme for the maintenance of party power by the patronage of office, and this patronage to be created by general removal, was adopted, and has been carried into full operation. Indeed, before General Jackson's inauguration, the party put the system into practice. In the last session of Mr. Adams's administration, the friends of General Jackson constituted a majority in the Senate; and nominations, made by Mr. Adams to fill vacancies which had occurred in the ordinary way, were postponed, by this major-

ity, beyond the 3d of March, *for the purpose, openly avowed, of giving the nominations to General Jackson.* A nomination for a judge of the Supreme Court, and many others of less magnitude, were thus disposed of.

And what did we witness, Sir, when the administration actually commenced, in the full exercise of its authority? One universal sweep, one undistinguishing blow, levelled against all who were not of the successful party. No worth, public or private, no service, civil or military, was of power to resist the relentless greediness of proscription. Soldiers of the late war, soldiers of the Revolutionary war, the very contemporaries of the independence of the country, all lost their situations. No office was too high, and none too low; for *office* was the spoil, and "*all the spoils,*" it is said, "*belong to the victors!*" If a man holding an office necessary for his daily support had presented himself covered with the scars of wounds received in every battle, from Bunker Hill to Yorktown, these would not have protected him against this reckless rapacity. Nay, Sir, if Warren himself had been among the living, and had possessed any office under government, high or low, he would not have been suffered to hold it a single hour, unless he could show that he had strictly complied with the party statutes, and had put a well-marked party collar round his own neck. Look, Sir, to the case of the late venerable Major Melville. He was a personification of the spirit of 1776, one of the earliest to venture in the cause of liberty. He was of the Tea Party; one of the very first to expose himself to British power. And his whole life was consonant with this, its beginning. Always ardent in the cause of liberty, always a zealous friend to his country, always acting with the party which he supposed cherished the genuine republican spirit most fervently, always estimable and respectable in private life, he seemed armed against this miserable petty tyranny of party as far as man could be. But he felt its blow, and he fell. He held an office in the custom-house, and had held it for a long course of years; and he was deprived of it, as if unworthy to serve the country which he loved, and for whose liberties, in the vigor of his early manhood, he had thrust himself into the very jaws of its enemies. There was no mistake in the matter. His character, his standing, his Revolutionary services, were all well known; but they were known to no purpose; they weighed not one

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feather against party pretensions. It cost no pains to remove him; it cost no compunction to wring his aged heart with this retribution from his country for his services, his zeal, and his fidelity. Sir, you will bear witness,* that, when his successor was nominated to the Senate, and the Senate were informed who had been removed to make way for that nomination, its members were struck with horror. They had not conceived the administration to be capable of such a thing; and yet, they said, What can *we* do? The man is removed; *we* cannot recall him; we can only act upon the nomination before us. Sir, you and I thought otherwise; and I rejoice that we did think otherwise. We thought it our duty to resist the nomination to fill a vacancy thus created. We thought it our duty to oppose this proscription, when, and where, and as, we constitutionally could. We besought the Senate to go with us, and to take a stand before the country on this great question. We invoked them to try the deliberate sense of the people; to trust themselves before the tribunal of public opinion; to resist at first, to resist at last, to resist always, the introduction of this unsocial, this mischievous, this dangerous, this belligerent principle into the practice of the government.

Mr. President, as far as I know, there is no civilized country on earth, in which, on a change of rulers, there is such an *inquisition for spoil* as we have witnessed in this free republic. The Inaugural Address of 1829 spoke of a *searching operation* of government. The most searching operation, Sir, of the present administration, has been its search for office and place. When, Sir, did any English minister, Whig or Tory, ever make such an inquest? When did he ever go down to low-water-mark, to make an ousting of tide-waiters? When did he ever take away the daily bread of weighers, and gaugers, and measurers? When did he ever go into the villages, to disturb the little post-offices, the mail contracts, and every thing else in the remotest degree connected with government? Sir, a British minister who should do this, and should afterwards show his head in a British House of Commons, would be received by a universal hiss.

* Hon. Nathaniel Silsbee, President of the Convention, was Mr. Webster's colleague in the Senate at the time referred to.

I have little to say of the selections made to fill vacancies thus created. It is true, however, and it is a natural consequence of the system which has been acted on, that, within the last three years, more nominations have been rejected on the ground of *unfitness*, than in all the preceding forty years of the government. And these nominations, you know, Sir, could not have been rejected but by votes of the President's own friends. The cases were too strong to be resisted. Even party attachment could not stand them. In some not a third of the Senate, in others not ten votes, and in others not a single vote, could be obtained; and this for no particular reason known only to the Senate, but on general grounds of the want of character and qualifications; on grounds known to every body else, as well as to the Senate. All this, Sir, is perfectly natural and consistent. The same party selfishness which drives good men out of office will push bad men in. Political proscription leads necessarily to the filling of offices with incompetent persons, and to a consequent mal-execution of official duties. And in my opinion, Sir, this principle of claiming a monopoly of office by the right of conquest, unless the public shall effectually rebuke and restrain it, will entirely change the character of our government. It elevates party above country; it forgets the common weal in the pursuit of personal emolument; it tends to form, it does form, we see that it has formed, a political combination, united by no common principles or opinions among its members, either upon the powers of the government, or the true policy of the country; but held together simply as an association, under the charm of a popular head, seeking to maintain possession of the government by a *vigorous exercise of its patronage*; and for this purpose agitating, and alarming, and distressing social life by the exercise of a tyrannical party proscription. Sir, if this course of things cannot be checked, good men will grow tired of the exercise of political privileges. They will have nothing to do with popular elections. They will see that such elections are but a mere selfish contest for office; and they will abandon the government to the scramble of the bold, the daring, and the desperate.

It seems, Mr. President, to be a peculiar and singular characteristic of the present administration, that it came into power on a cry against abuses, *which did not exist*, and then, as soon

as it was in, as if in mockery of the perception and intelligence of the people, *it created those very abuses*, and carried them to a great length. Thus the chief magistrate himself, before he came into the chair, in a formal public paper, denounced the practice of appointing members of Congress to office. He said, that, if that practice continued, *corruption would become the order of the day*; and, as if to fasten and nail down his own consistency to that point, he declared that it was *due to himself to practise what he recommended to others*. Yet, Sir, as soon as he was in power, these fastenings gave way, the nails all flew, and the promised *consistency* remains a striking proof of the manner in which political assurances are sometimes fulfilled. He has already appointed more members of Congress to office than any of his predecessors, in the longest period of administration. Before his time, there was no reason to complain of these appointments. They had not been numerous under any administration. Under this, they have been numerous, and some of them such as may well justify complaint.

Another striking instance of the exhibition of the same characteristics may be found in the sentiments of the Inaugural Address, and in the subsequent practice, on the subject of *interfering with the freedom of elections*. The Inaugural Address declares, that it is necessary to reform abuses which have *brought the patronage of the government into conflict with the freedom of elections*. And what has been the subsequent practice? Look to the newspapers; look to the published letters of officers of the government, advising, exhorting, soliciting, friends and partisans to greater exertions in the cause of the party; see all done, everywhere, which patronage and power can do, to affect, not only elections in the general government, but also in every State government, and then say, how well *this* promise of reforming abuses has been kept. At what former period, under what former administration, did public officers of the United States thus interfere in elections? Certainly, Sir, never. In this respect, then, as well as in others, that which was not true as a charge against previous administrations would have been true, if it had assumed the form of a prophecy respecting the acts of the present.

But there is another attempt to grasp and to wield a power

over public opinion, of a still more daring character, and far more dangerous effects.

In all popular governments, a **FREE PRESS** is the most important of all agents and instruments. It not only expresses public opinion, but, to a very great degree, it contributes to form that opinion. It is an engine for good or for evil, as it may be directed; but an engine of which nothing can resist the force. The conductors of the press, in popular governments, occupy a place, in the social and political system, of the very highest consequence. They wear the character of public instructors. Their daily labors bear directly on the intelligence, the morals, the taste, and the public spirit of the country. Not only are they journalists, recording political occurrences, but they discuss principles, they comment on measures, they canvass characters; they hold a power over the reputation, the feelings, the happiness, of individuals. The public ear is always open to their addresses, the public sympathy easily made responsive to their sentiments. It is indeed, Sir, a distinction of high honor, that theirs is the only profession expressly protected and guarded by constitutional enactments. Their employment soars so high, in its general consequences it is so intimately connected with the public happiness, that its security is provided for by the fundamental law. While it acts in a manner worthy of this distinction, the press is a fountain of light, and a source of gladdening warmth. It instructs the public mind, and animates the spirit of patriotism. Its loud voice suppresses every thing which would raise itself against the public liberty; and its blasting rebuke causes incipient despotism to perish in the bud.

But remember, Sir, that these are the attributes of a **FREE** press only. And is a press that is purchased or pensioned more free than a press that is fettered? Can the people look for truths to partial sources, whether rendered partial through fear or through favor? Why shall not a manacled press be trusted with the maintenance and defence of popular rights? Because it is supposed to be under the influence of a power which may prove greater than the love of truth. Such a press may screen abuses in government, or be silent. It may fear to speak. And may it not fear to speak, too, when its conductors, if they speak in any but one way, may lose their means of livelihood? Is dependence on government for bread no temptation to screen

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its abuses? Will the press always speak the truth, when the truth, if spoken, may be the means of silencing it for the future? Is the truth in no danger, is the watchman under no temptation, when he can neither proclaim the approach of national evils, nor seem to descry them, without the loss of his place?

Mr. President, an open attempt to secure the aid and friendship of the public press, by bestowing the emoluments of office on its active conductors, seems to me, of every thing we have witnessed, to be the most reprehensible. It degrades both the government and the press. As far as its natural effect extends, it turns the palladium of liberty into an engine of party. It brings the agency, activity, energy, and patronage of government all to bear, with united force, on the means of general intelligence, and on the adoption or rejection of political opinions. It so completely perverts the true object of government, it so entirely revolutionizes our whole system, that the chief business of those in power is directed rather to the propagation of opinions favorable to themselves, than to the execution of the laws. This propagation of opinions, through the press, becomes the main administrative duty. Some fifty or sixty editors of leading journals have been appointed to office by the present executive. A stand has been made against this proceeding, in the Senate, with partial success; but, by means of appointments which do not come before the Senate, or other means, the number has been carried to the extent I have mentioned. Certainly, Sir, the editors of the public journals are not to be disfranchised. Certainly they are fair candidates either for popular elections, or a just participation in office. Certainly they reckon in their number some of the first geniuses, the best scholars, and the most honest and well-principled men in the country. But the complaint is against the *system*, against the *practice*, against the undisguised attempt to secure the favor of the press by means addressed to its pecuniary interest, and these means, too, drawn from the public treasury, being no other than the appointed compensations for the performance of official duties. Sir, the press itself should resent this. Its own character for purity and independence is at stake. It should resist a connection rendering it obnoxious to so many imputations. It should point to its honorable denomination in our constitutions of government, and it should maintain the character, there ascribed to it, of a FREE PRESS.

There can, Sir, be no objection to the appointment of an editor to office, if he is the fittest man. There can be no objection to considering the services which, in that or in any other capacity, he may have rendered his country. He may have done much to maintain her rights against foreign aggression, and her character against insult. He may have honored, as well as defended her; and may, therefore, be justly regarded and selected, in the choice of faithful public agents. But the ground of complaint is, that the aiding, by the press, of the election of an individual, is rewarded, by that same individual, with the gift of moneyed offices. Men are turned out of office, and others put in, and receive salaries from the public treasury, on the ground, either openly avowed or falsely denied, that they have rendered service in the election of the very individual who makes this removal and makes this appointment. Every man, Sir, must see that this is a vital stab at the purity of the press. It not only assails its independence, by addressing sinister motives to it, but it furnishes from the public treasury the means of exciting these motives. It extends the executive power over the press in a most daring manner. It operates to give a direction to opinion, not favorable to the government, in the aggregate; not favorable to the Constitution and laws; not favorable to the legislature; but favorable to the executive alone. The consequence often is, just what might be looked for, that the portion of the press thus made fast to the executive interest denounces Congress, denounces the judiciary, complains of the laws, and quarrels with the Constitution. This exercise of the right of appointment to this end is an augmentation, and a vast one, of the executive power, singly and alone. It uses that power strongly against all other branches of the government, and it uses it strongly, too, for any struggle which it may be called on to make with the public opinion of the country. Mr. President, I will quit this topic. There is much in it, in my judgment, affecting, not only the purity and independence of the press, but also the character and honor, the peace and security, of the government. I leave it, in all its bearings, to the consideration of the people.

Mr. President, among the novelties introduced into the government by the present administration is the frequent use of the

President's negative on acts of Congress. Under former Presidents, this power has been deemed an extraordinary one, to be exercised only in peculiar and marked cases. It was vested in the President, doubtless, as a guard against hasty or inconsiderate legislation, and against any act, inadvertently passed, which might seem to encroach on the just authority of other branches of the government. I do not recollect that, by all General Jackson's predecessors, this power was exercised more than four or five times. Not having recurred to the journals, I cannot, of course, be sure that I am numerically accurate in this particular; but such is my belief. I recollect no instance in the time of Mr. John Adams, Mr. Jefferson, or Mr. John Quincy Adams. The only cases which occur to me are two in General Washington's administration, two in Mr. Madison's, and one in Mr. Monroe's. There may be some others; but we all know that it is a power which has been very sparingly and reluctantly used, from the beginning of the government. The cases, Sir, to which I have now referred, were cases in which the President returned the bill with objections. The silent veto is, I believe, the exclusive adoption of the present administration. I think, indeed, that, some years ago, a bill, by inadvertence or accident, failed to receive the President's signature, and so did not become a law. But I am not aware of any instance, before the present administration, in which the President has, by design, omitted to sign a bill, and yet has not returned it to Congress. But since that administration came into power, the veto, in both kinds, has been repeatedly applied. In the case of the Maysville Road, the Montgomery Road, and the bank, we have had the veto, *with* reasons. In an internal improvement bill of a former session, in a similar bill at the late session, and in the State interest bill, we have had the silent veto, or refusal *without* reasons.

Now, Sir, it is to be considered, that the President has the power of recommending measures to Congress. Through his friends, he may and does oppose, also, any legislative movement which he does not approve. If, in addition to this, he may exercise a silent veto, at his pleasure, on all the bills presented to him during the last ten days of the session; if he may refuse assent to them all, without being called upon to assign any reasons whatever,—it will certainly be a great practical augmentation of his power. Any one, who looks at a volume of the

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statutes, will see that a great portion of all the laws are actually passed within the last ten days of each session. If the President is at liberty to negative any or all of these laws, at pleasure, or rather, to refuse to render the bills laws by approving them, and still may neglect to return them to Congress for renewed action, he will hold a very important control over the legislation of this country. The day of adjournment is usually fixed some weeks in advance. This being fixed, a little activity and perseverance may easily, in most cases, and perhaps in all, where no alarm has been excited, postpone important pending measures to a period within ten days of the close of the session; and this operation subjects all such measures to the discretion of the President, who may sign the bills or not, without being obliged to state his reasons publicly.

The bill for rechartering the bank would have been inevitably destroyed by the silent veto, if its friends had not refused to fix on any term for adjournment before the President should have had the bill in his possession so long as to be required constitutionally to sign it, or to send it back with his reasons for not signing it. The two houses did not agree, and would not agree, to fix a day for adjournment, until the bill was sent to the President; and then care was taken to fix on such a day as should allow him the whole constitutional period. This seasonable presentment rescued the bill from the power of the silent negative.

This practical innovation on the mode of administering the government, so much at variance with its general principles, and so capable of defeating the most useful acts, deserves public consideration. Its tendency is to disturb the harmony which ought always to exist between Congress and the executive, and to turn that which the Constitution intended only as an extraordinary remedy for extraordinary cases into a common means of making executive discretion paramount to the discretion of Congress, in the enactment of laws.

Mr. President, the executive has not only used these unaccustomed means to prevent the passage of laws, but it has also refused to enforce the execution of laws actually passed. An eminent instance of this is found in the course adopted relative to the Indian intercourse law of 1802. Upon being applied to, in behalf of the MISSIONARIES, to execute that law, for their

relief and protection, the President replied, that, *the State of Georgia having extended her laws over the Indian territory, the laws of Congress had thereby been superseded.* This is the substance of his answer, as communicated through the Secretary of War. He holds, then, that the law of the State is paramount to the law of Congress. The Supreme Court has adjudged this act of Georgia to be void, as being repugnant to a constitutional law of the United States. But the President pays no more regard to this decision than to the act of Congress itself. The missionaries remain in prison, held there by a condemnation under a law of a State which the supreme judicial tribunal has pronounced to be null and void. The Supreme Court have decided that the act of Congress is constitutional; that it is a binding statute; that it has the same force as other laws, and is as much entitled to be obeyed and executed as other laws. The President, on the contrary, declares that the law of Congress has been superseded by the law of the State, and therefore he will not carry its provisions into effect. Now we know, Sir, that the Constitution of the United States declares, that that Constitution, and all acts of Congress passed in pursuance of it, shall be the supreme law of the land, any thing in any State law to the contrary notwithstanding. This would seem to be a plain case, then, in which the law should be executed. It has been solemnly decided to be in actual force, by the highest judicial authority; its execution is demanded for the relief of free citizens, now suffering the pains of unjust and unlawful imprisonment; yet the President refuses to execute it.

In the case of the Chicago Road, some sessions ago, the President approved the bill, but accompanied his approval by a message, saying how far he deemed it a proper law, and how far, therefore, it ought to be carried into execution.

In the case of the harbor bill of the late session, being applied to by a member of Congress for directions for carrying parts of the law into effect, he declined giving them, and made a distinction between such parts of the law as he should cause to be executed, and such as he should not; and his right to make this distinction has been openly maintained, by those who habitually defend his measures. Indeed, Sir, these, and other instances of liberties taken with plain statute laws, flow naturally from the principles expressly avowed by the President, under

his own hand. In that important document, Sir, upon which it seems to be his fate to stand or to fall before the American people, the veto message, he holds the following language:—“Each public officer who takes an oath to support the Constitution, swears that he will support it as he understands it, and not as it is understood by others.” Mr. President, the general adoption of the sentiments expressed in this sentence would dissolve our government. It would raise every man’s private opinions into a standard for his own conduct; and there certainly is, there can be, no government, where every man is to judge for himself of his own rights and his own obligations. Where every one is his own arbiter, force, and not law, is the governing power. He who may judge for himself, and decide for himself, must execute his own decisions; and this is the law of force. I confess, Sir, it strikes me with astonishment, that so wild, so disorganizing, a sentiment should be uttered by a President of the United States. I should think it must have escaped from its author through want of reflection, or from the habit of little reflection on such subjects, if I could suppose it possible, that, on a question exciting so much public attention, and of so much national importance, any such extraordinary doctrine could find its way, through inadvertence, into a formal and solemn public act. Standing as it does, it affirms a proposition which would effectually repeal all constitutional and all legal obligations. The Constitution declares, that every public officer, in the State governments as well as in the general government, shall take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States. This is all. Would it not have cast an air of ridicule on the whole provision, if the Constitution had gone on to add the words, “as he understands it”? What could come nearer to a solemn farce, than to bind a man by oath, and still leave him to be his own interpreter of his own obligation? Sir, those who are to execute the laws have no more a license to construe them for themselves, than those whose only duty is to obey them. Public officers are bound to support the Constitution; private citizens are bound to obey it; and there is no more indulgence granted to the public officer to support the Constitution only *as he understands it*, than to a private citizen to obey it only *as he understands it*; and what is true of the Constitution, in this respect, is equally true of any law. Laws are to be executed.

and to be obeyed, not as individuals may interpret them, but according to public, authoritative interpretation and adjudication. The sentiment of the message would abrogate the obligation of the whole criminal code. If every man is to judge of the Constitution and the laws for himself, if he is to obey and support them only as he may say he understands them, a revolution, I think, would take place in the administration of justice; and discussions about the law of treason, murder, and arson should be addressed, not to the judicial bench, but to those who might stand charged with such offences. The object of discussion should be, if we run out this notion to its natural extent, to enlighten the culprit himself how he ought to understand the law.

Mr. President, how is it possible that a sentiment so wild, and so dangerous, so encouraging to all who feel a desire to oppose the laws, and to impair the Constitution, should have been uttered by the President of the United States at this eventful and critical moment? Are we not threatened with dissolution of the Union? Are we not told that the laws of the government shall be openly and directly resisted? Is not the whole country looking, with the utmost anxiety, to what may be the result of these threatened courses? And at this very moment, so full of peril to the state, the chief magistrate puts forth opinions and sentiments as truly subversive of all government, as absolutely in conflict with the authority of the Constitution, as the wildest theories of nullification. Mr. President, I have very little regard for the law, or the logic, of nullification. But there is not an individual in its ranks, capable of putting two ideas together, who, if you will grant him the principles of the veto message, cannot defend all that nullification has ever threatened.

To make this assertion good, Sir, let us see how the case stands. The Legislature of South Carolina, it is said, will nullify the late revenue or tariff law, because, *they say*, it is not warranted by the Constitution of the United States, *as they understand the Constitution*. They, as well as the President of the United States, have sworn to support the Constitution. Both he and they have taken the same oath, in the same words. Now, Sir, since he claims the right to interpret the Constitution as he pleases, how can he deny the same right to them? Is his oath less stringent than theirs? Has he a prerogative of

dispensation which they do not possess? How can he answer them, when they tell him, that the revenue laws are unconstitutional, *as they understand the Constitution*, and that therefore they will nullify them? Will he reply to them, according to the doctrines of his annual message in 1830, that *precedent* has settled the question, if it was ever doubtful? They will answer him in his own words in the veto message, that, in such a case, *precedent* is not binding. Will he say to them, that the revenue law is a law of Congress, which must be executed until it shall be declared void? They will answer him, that, in other cases, he has himself refused to execute laws of Congress which had not been declared void, but which had been, on the contrary, declared valid. Will he urge the force of judicial decisions? They will answer, that he himself does not admit the binding obligation of such decisions. Sir, the President of the United States is of opinion, that an individual, called on to execute a law, may himself judge of its constitutional validity. Does nullification teach any thing more revolutionary than that? The President is of opinion, that judicial interpretations of the Constitution and the laws do not bind the consciences, and ought not to bind the conduct, of men. Is nullification at all more disorganizing than that? The President is of opinion, that every officer is bound to support the Constitution only according to what ought to be, in his private opinion, its construction. Has nullification, in its wildest flight, ever reached to an extravagance like that? No, Sir, never. The doctrine of nullification, in my judgment a most false, dangerous, and revolutionary doctrine, is this; that *the State*, or *a State*, may declare the extent of the obligations which its citizens are under to the United States; in other words, that a State, by State laws and State judicatures, may conclusively construe the Constitution for its own citizens. But that every individual may construe it for himself is a refinement on the theory of resistance to constitutional power, a sublimation of the right of being disloyal to the Union, a free charter for the elevation of private opinion above the authority of the fundamental law of the state, such as was never presented to the public view, and the public astonishment, even by nullification itself. Its first appearance is in the veto message. Melancholy, lamentable, indeed, Sir, is our condition, when, at a moment of serious danger and wide-spread alarm, such senti-

ments are found to proceed from the chief magistrate of the government. Sir, I cannot feel that the Constitution is safe in such hands. I cannot feel that the present administration is its fit and proper guardian.

But let me ask, Sir, what evidence there is, that the President is himself opposed to the doctrines of nullification: I do not say to the political party which now pushes these doctrines, but to the doctrines themselves. Has he anywhere rebuked them? Has he anywhere discouraged them? Has his influence been exerted to inspire respect for the Constitution, and to produce obedience to the laws? Has he followed the bright example of his predecessors? Has he held fast by the institutions of the country? Has he summoned the good and the wise around him? Has he admonished the country that the Union is in danger, and called on all the patriotic to come out in its support? Alas! Sir, we have seen nothing, nothing, of all this.

Mr. President, I shall not discuss the doctrine of nullification. I am sure it can have no friends here. Gloss it and disguise it as we may, it is a pretence incompatible with the authority of the Constitution. If direct separation be not its only mode of operation, separation is, nevertheless, its direct consequence. That a State may nullify a law of the Union, and still remain *in* the Union; that she may have Senators and Representatives in the government, and yet be at liberty to disobey and resist that government; that she may partake in the common councils, and yet not be bound by their results; that she may control a law of Congress, so that it shall be one thing with her, while it is another thing with the rest of the States;—all these propositions seem to me so absolutely at war with common sense and reason, that I do not understand how any intelligent person can yield the slightest assent to them. Nullification, it is in vain to attempt to conceal it, is dissolution; it is dismemberment; it is the breaking up of the Union. If it shall practically succeed in any one State, from that moment there are twenty-four States in the Union no longer. Now, Sir, I think it exceedingly probable that the President may come to an open rupture with that portion of his original party which now constitutes what is called the Nullification party. I think it likely he will oppose the proceedings of that party, if they shall adopt measures coming

directly in conflict with the laws of the United States. But how will he oppose? What will be his course of remedy? Sir, I wish to call the attention of the Convention, and of the people, earnestly to this question,—How will the President attempt to put down nullification, if he shall attempt it at all?

Sir, for one, I protest in advance against such remedies as I have heard hinted. The administration itself keeps a profound silence, but its friends have spoken for it. We are told, Sir, that the President will immediately employ the military force, and at once blockade Charleston! A military remedy, a remedy by direct belligerent operation, has been thus suggested, and nothing else has been suggested, as the intended means of preserving the Union. Sir, there is no little reason to think, that this suggestion is true. We cannot be altogether unmindful of the past, and therefore we cannot be altogether unapprehensive for the future. For one, Sir, I raise my voice beforehand against the unauthorized employment of military power, and against superseding the authority of the laws, by an armed force, under pretence of putting down nullification. The President has no authority to blockade Charleston; the President has no authority to employ military force, till he shall be duly required so to do, by law, and by the civil authorities. His duty is to cause the laws to be executed. His duty is to support the civil authority. His duty is, if the laws be resisted, to employ the military force of the country, if necessary, for their support and execution; but to do all this in compliance only with law, and with decisions of the tribunals. If, by any ingenious devices, those who resist the laws escape from the reach of judicial authority, as it is now provided to be exercised, it is entirely competent to Congress to make such new provisions as the exigency of the case may demand. These provisions undoubtedly would be made. With a constitutional and efficient head of the government, with an administration really and truly in favor of the Constitution, the country can grapple with nullification. By the force of reason, by the progress of enlightened opinion, by the natural, genuine patriotism of the country, and by the steady and well-sustained operations of law, the progress of disorganization may be successfully checked, and the Union maintained. Let it be remembered, that, where nullification is most powerful, it is not unopposed. Let it be remembered, that they who would break up

the Union by force have to march toward that object through thick ranks of as brave and good men as the country can show, men strong in character, strong in intelligence, strong in the purity of their own motives, and ready, always ready, to sacrifice their fortunes and their lives to the preservation of the constitutional union of the States. If we can relieve the country from an administration which denies to the Constitution those powers which are the breath of its life; if we can place the government in the hands of its friends; if we can secure it against the dangers of irregular and unlawful military force; if it can be under the lead of an administration whose moderation, firmness, and wisdom shall inspire confidence and command respect,—we may yet surmount the dangers, numerous and formidable as they are, which surround us.

Sir, I see little prospect of overcoming these dangers without a change of men. After all that has passed, the reelection of the present executive will give the national sanction to sentiments and to measures which will effectually change the government; which, in short, must destroy the government. If the President be reelected, with concurrent and coöperating majorities in both houses of Congress, I do not see, that, in four years more, all the power which is suffered to remain in the government will not be held by the executive hand. Nullification will proceed, or will be put down by a power as unconstitutional as itself. The revenues will be managed by a treasury bank. The use of the veto will be considered as sanctioned by the public voice. The Senate, if not “cut down,” will be bound down, and, the President commanding the army and the navy, and holding all places of trust to be party property, what will then be left, Sir, for constitutional reliance?

Sir, we have been accustomed to venerate the judiciary, and to repose hopes of safety on that branch of the government. But let us not deceive ourselves. The judicial power cannot stand for a long time against the executive power. The judges, it is true, hold their places by an independent tenure; but they are mortal. That which is the common lot of humanity must make it necessary to renew the benches of justice. And how will they be filled? Doubtless, Sir, they will be filled by judges agreeing with the President in his constitutional opinions. If the court is felt as an obstacle, the first opportunity and ev-

every opportunity will certainly be embraced to give it less and less the character of an obstacle. Sir, without pursuing these suggestions, I only say that the country must prepare itself for any change in the judicial department such as it shall deliberately sanction in other departments.

But, Sir, what is the prospect of change? Is there any hope that the national sentiment will recover its accustomed tone, and restore to the government a just and efficient administration?

Sir, if there be something of doubt on this point, there is also something, perhaps much, of hope. The popularity of the present chief magistrate, springing from causes not connected with his administration of the government, has been great. Public gratitude for military service has remained fast to him, in defiance of many things in his civil administration calculated to weaken its hold. At length there are indications, not to be mistaken, of new sentiments and new impressions. At length, a conviction of danger to important interests, and to the security of the government, has made its lodgement in the public mind. At length, public sentiment begins to have its free course and to produce its just effects. I fully believe, Sir, that a great majority of the nation desire a change in the administration; and that it will be difficult for party organization or party denunciation to suppress the effective utterance of that general wish. There are unhappy differences, it is true, about the fit person to be successor to the present incumbent in the chief magistracy; and it is possible that this disunion may, in the end, defeat the will of the majority. But so far as we agree together, let us act together. Wherever our sentiments concur, let our hands coöperate. If we cannot at present agree who should be President, we are at least agreed who ought not to be. I fully believe, Sir, that gratifying intelligence is already on the wing. While we are yet deliberating in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania is voting. This week, she elects her members to the next Congress. I doubt not the result of that election will show an important change in public sentiment in that State; nor can I doubt that the great States adjoining her, holding similar constitutional principles and having similar interests, will feel the impulse of the same causes which affect her. The people of the United States, by a countless majority,

are attached to the Constitution. If they shall be convinced that it is in danger, they will come to its rescue, and will save it. It cannot be destroyed, even now, if **THEY** will undertake its guardianship and protection.

But suppose, Sir, there was less hope than there is, would that consideration weaken the force of our obligations? Are we at a post which we are at liberty to desert when it becomes difficult to hold it? May we fly at the approach of danger? Does our fidelity to the Constitution require no more of us than to enjoy its blessings, to bask in the prosperity which it has shed around us and our fathers? and are we at liberty to abandon it in the hour of its peril, or to make for it but a faint and heartless struggle, for the want of encouragement and the want of hope? Sir, if no State come to our succor, if everywhere else the contest should be given up, here let it be protracted to the last moment. Here, where the first blood of the Revolution was shed, let the last effort be made for that which is the greatest blessing obtained by the Revolution, a free and united government. Sir, in our endeavors to maintain our existing forms of government, we are acting not for ourselves alone, but for the great cause of constitutional liberty all over the globe. We are trustees holding a sacred treasure, in which all the lovers of freedom have a stake. Not only in revolutionized France, where there are no longer subjects, where the monarch can no longer say, I am the state; not only in reformed England, where our principles, our institutions, our practice of free government, are now daily quoted and commended; but in the depths of Germany, also, and among the desolated fields and the still smoking ashes of Poland, prayers are uttered for the preservation of our union and happiness. We are surrounded, Sir, by a cloud of witnesses. The gaze of the sons of liberty, everywhere, is upon us, anxiously, intently, upon us. They may see us fall in the struggle for our Constitution and government, but Heaven forbid that they should see us recreant.

At least, Sir, let the star of Massachusetts be the last which shall be seen to fall from heaven, and to plunge into the utter darkness of disunion. Let her shrink back, let her hold others back if she can, at any rate, let her keep herself back, from this gulf, full at once of fire and of blackness; yes, Sir, as far as human foresight can scan, or human imagination fathom, full

of the fire and the blood of civil war, and of the thick darkness of general political disgrace, ignominy, and ruin. Though the worst may happen that can happen, and though she may not be able to prevent the catastrophe, yet let her maintain her own integrity, her own high honor, her own unwavering fidelity, so that with respect and decency, though with a broken and a bleeding heart, she may pay the last tribute to a glorious, departed, free Constitution.

Reception at Buffalo

Reception at Buffalo*

IN the summer of 1833, Mr. Webster made a visit to the State of Ohio. On his way thither, while at Buffalo, New York, he was invited by the citizens of that place to attend a public dinner, which his engagements, and the necessity of an early departure, compelled him to decline. He accepted, however, an invitation to be present at the launching of a steamboat, to which the proprietors had given the name of DANIEL WEBSTER, and, in reply to an address from one of them, made the following remarks:—

I AVAIL myself gladly of this opportunity of making my acknowledgments to the proprietors of this vessel, for the honor conferred upon me by allowing her to bear my name. Such a token of regard, had it proceeded from my immediate friends and neighbors, could not but have excited feelings of gratitude. It is more calculated to awaken these sentiments, when coming from gentlemen of character and worth with whom I have not had the pleasure of personal acquaintance, and whose motive, I may flatter myself, is to be found in an indulgent opinion towards well-intentioned services in a public situation.

It gives me great pleasure, also, on the occasion of so large an assembly of the people of Buffalo, to express to them my thanks for the kindness and hospitality with which I have been received in this young, but growing and interesting city. The launching of another vessel on these inland seas is but a fresh occasion of congratulation on the rapid growth, the great active prosperity, and the animating prospects of this city. Eight years ago, fellow-citizens, I enjoyed the pleasure of a short visit to this place. There was then but one steamboat on Lake

* Remarks made to the Citizens of Buffalo, June, 1833.

Eric; it made its passage once in ten or fifteen days only; and I remember that persons in my own vicinity, intending to travel to the Far West by that conveyance, wrote to their friends here to learn the day of the commencement of the contemplated voyage. I understand that there are now eighteen steamboats plying on the lake, all finding full employment; and that a boat leaves Buffalo twice every day for Detroit and the ports in Ohio. The population of Buffalo, now four times as large as it was then, has kept pace with the augmentation of its commercial business. This rapid progress is an indication, in a single instance, of what is likely to be the rate of the future progress of the city. So many circumstances incline to favor its advancement, that it is difficult to estimate the rate by which it may hereafter proceed. It will probably not be long before the products of the fisheries of the East, the importations of the Atlantic frontier, the productions, mineral and vegetable, of all the Northwestern States, and the sugars of Louisiana, will find their way hither by inland water communication. Much of this, indeed, has already taken place, and is of daily occurrence. Many, who remember the competition between Buffalo and Black Rock for the site of the city, will doubtless live to see the city spread over both. This singular prosperity, fellow-citizens, so gratifying for the present, and accompanied with such high hopes for the future, is due to your own industry and enterprise, to your favored position, and to the flourishing condition of the internal commerce of the country; and the blessings and the riches of that internal commerce, be it ever remembered, are the fruits of a united government, and one general, common commercial system.

It is not only the trade of New York, of Ohio, of New England, of Indiana, or of Michigan, but it is a part of the great aggregate of the trade of all the States, in which you so largely and so successfully partake. Who does not see that the advantages here enjoyed spring from a general government and a uniform code? Who does not see, that, if these States had remained severed, and each had existed with a system of imposts and commercial regulations of its own, all excluding and repelling, rather than inviting, the intercourse of the rest, the place could hardly have hoped to be more than a respectable frontier post? Or can any man look to the one and to the other side

of this beautiful lake and river, and not see, in their different conditions, the plain and manifest results of different political institutions and commercial regulations?

It would be pleasant, fellow-citizens, to dwell on these topics, so worthy at all times of regard and reflection; and especially so fit to engage attention at the present moment. But this is not the proper moment to pursue them; and, tendering to you once more my thanks and good wishes, I take my leave of you by expressing my hope for the continued success of that great interest, so essential to your happiness, — **THE COMMERCE OF THE LAKES, A NEW-DISCOVERED SOURCE OF NATIONAL PROSPERITY, AND A NEW BOND OF NATIONAL UNION.**

An address was also made to Mr. Webster in behalf of the mechanics and manufacturers of Buffalo, to which he returned the following reply :—

I NEED hardly say, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, that it gives me much satisfaction to receive this mark of approbation of my public conduct from the manufacturers and mechanics of Buffalo. Those who are the most immediately affected by the measures of the government are naturally the earliest to perceive their operation, and to foresee their final results. Allow me to say, Gentlemen, that the confidence expressed by you in my continuance in the general course which I have pursued must rest, and may rest safely, I trust, on the history of the past. Desiring always to avoid extremes, and to observe a prudent moderation in regard to the protective system, I yet hold steadiness and perseverance, in maintaining what has been established, to be essential to the public prosperity. Nothing can be worse than that laws concerning the daily labor and the daily bread of whole classes of the people should be subject to frequent and violent changes. It were far better not to move at all than to move forward and then fall back again.

My sentiments, Gentlemen, on the tariff question, are generally known. In my opinion, a just and a leading object in the whole system is the encouragement and protection of American manual labor. I confess, that every day's experience convinces me more and more of the high propriety of regarding this object. Our government is made for all, not for a few. Its object is to promote the greatest good of the whole; and this ought to be kept constantly in view in its administration. The far greater number of those who maintain the government belong

to what may be called the industrious or productive classes of the community. With us labor is not depressed, ignorant, and unintelligent. On the contrary, it is active, spirited, enterprising, seeking its own rewards, and laying up for its own competence and its own support. The motive to labor is the great stimulus to our whole society; and no system is wise or just which does not afford this stimulus, as far as it may. The protection of American labor against the injurious competition of foreign labor, so far, at least, as respects general handicraft productions, is known historically to have been one end designed to be obtained by establishing the Constitution; and this object, and the constitutional power to accomplish it, ought never in any degree to be surrendered or compromised.

Our political institutions, Gentlemen, place power in the hands of all the people; and to make the exercise of this power, in such hands, salutary, it is indispensable that all the people should enjoy, first, the means of education, and, second, the reasonable certainty of procuring a competent livelihood by industry and labor. These institutions are neither designed for, nor suited to, a nation of ignorant paupers. To disseminate knowledge, then, universally, and to secure to labor and industry their just rewards, is the duty both of the general and the State governments, each in the exercise of its appropriate powers. To be free, the people must be intelligently free; to be substantially independent, they must be able to secure themselves against want, by sobriety and industry; to be safe depositaries of political power, they must be able to comprehend and understand the general interests of the community, and must themselves have a stake in the welfare of that community. The interest of labor, therefore, has an importance, in our system, beyond what belongs to it as a mere question of political economy. It is connected with our forms of government, and our whole social system. The activity and prosperity which at present prevail among us, as every one must notice, are produced by the excitement of compensating prices to labor; and it is fervently to be hoped that no unpropitious circumstances and no unwise policy may counteract this efficient cause of general competency and public happiness.

I pray you, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, to receive personally my thanks for the manner in which you have communicated to me the sentiments of the meeting which you represent.

Reception at Pittsburg

Introductory Note

MR. WEBSTER arrived at Pittsburg on the evening of the 4th of July, accompanied by a numerous cavalcade of citizens. He was immediately waited on by a committee, with the following letter : —

“ TO THE HON. DANIEL WEBSTER.

“ *Pittsburg, July 4, 1833.*

“ SIR, — At a meeting of the citizens of Pittsburg, the undersigned were appointed a committee to convey to you a cordial welcome, and an assurance of the exalted sense which is entertained of your character and public services.

“ The feeling is one which pervades our whole community, scorning any narrower discrimination than that of lovers of our sacred Union, and admirers of the highest moral and intellectual qualities, steadily and triumphantly devoted to the noblest purposes.

“ The resolutions under which the committee act indicate no particular form of tribute, but contain only an earnest injunction to seek the best mode by which to manifest the universal recognition of your claim to the admiration and gratitude of every American citizen. It will be deeply mortifying to us, if our execution of this trust shall fail adequately to represent the enthusiastic feeling in which it had its origin.

“ The committee will have the honor of waiting on you in person, at such an hour as you may please to designate, with a view to ascertain how they can best fulfil the purposes of their appointment. It will be very gratifying if your convenience will permit you to partake of a public dinner at any period during your stay.

“ We have the honor to be, with the highest respect, &c.

JAMES ROSS,
BENJAMIN BAKEWELL,
CHARLES AVERY,
WILLIAM WADE,
SAMUEL PETTIGREW,
GEORGE MILTENBERGER,
ISAAC LIGHTNER,
SYLVANUS LATHROP,
JOHN ARTHURS,
ALEX. BRACKENRIDGE,
WILLIAM ROBINSON, JUN
GEORGE A. COOK,
W. W. FETTERMAN,
SAMUEL ROSEBURGH,
WILLIAM MACKAY,
JAMES JOHNSTON.

RICHARD BIDDLE,
SAMUEL P. DARLINGTON,
MICHAEL TIERNAN,
SAMUEL FAHNESTOCK,
THOMAS BAKEWELL,
WALTER H. LOWRIE,
WILLIAM W. IRWIN,
ROBERT S. CASSAT,
CORNELIUS DARRAGH,
BENJAMIN DARLINGTON,
NEVILLE B. CRAIG,
WILSON McCANDLES,
OWEN ASHTON,
CHARLES SHALER,
THOMAS SCOTT,
CHARLES H. ISRAEL.”

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To this letter Mr. Webster returned the following reply : —

“ *Pittsburg, July 5, 1833.*

“ GENTLEMEN, — I hardly know how to express my thanks for the hospitable and cordial welcome with which the citizens of Pittsburg are disposed to receive me on this my first visit to their city. The terms in which you express their sentiments, in your letter of yesterday, far transcend all merits of mine, and can have their origin only in spontaneous kindness and good feeling. I tender to you, Gentlemen, and to the meeting which you represent, my warmest acknowledgments. I rejoice sincerely to find the health of the city so satisfactory ; and I reciprocate with all the people of Pittsburg the most sincere and hearty good wishes for their prosperity and happiness. Long may it continue what it now is, an abode of comfort and hospitality, a refuge for the well-deserving from all nations, a model of industry, and an honor to the country.

“ It is my purpose, Gentlemen, to stay a day or two among you, to see such of your manufactories and public institutions as it may be in my power to visit. I most respectfully pray leave to decline a public dinner, but shall have great pleasure in meeting such of your fellow-citizens as may desire it, in the most friendly and unceremonious manner.

“ I am, Gentlemen, with very true regard, yours,

“ DANIEL WEBSTER.

“ TO HON. JAMES ROSS and others,
Gentlemen of the Committee.”

In deference to Mr. Webster's wishes, the idea of a formal dinner was abandoned ; but, as there was a general desire for some collective expression of public esteem, it was determined to invite him to meet the citizens in a spacious grove, at four o'clock on the afternoon of the 8th. Refreshments of a plain kind were spread around, under the charge of the committee ; but the tables could serve only as a *nucleus* to the multitude. His Honor the Mayor called the company to order, and addressed them as follows : —

“ I have to ask, Gentlemen, your attention for a few moments.

“ We are met here to mark our sense of the extraordinary merits of a distinguished statesman and public benefactor. At his particular request, every thing like parade or ceremonial has been waived ; and, in consequence, he has been the better enabled to receive, and to reciprocate, the hearty and spontaneous expression of your good-will. I am now desired to attempt, in your name, to give utterance to the universal feeling around me.

“ Gentlemen, we are this day citizens of the *United States*. The Union is safe. Not a star has fallen from that proud banner around which our affections have so long rallied. And when, with this delightful assurance, we cast our eyes back upon the eventful history of the last year, — when we recall the gloomy apprehensions, and perhaps hopeless despondency,

which came over us, — who, Gentlemen, can learn, without a glow of enthusiasm, that the great champion of the Constitution, that DANIEL WEBSTER, is now in the midst of us. To his mighty intellect, the nation, with one voice, confided its cause, — of life or death. Shall there be withheld from the triumphant advocate of the nation a nation's gratitude? Ours, Gentlemen, is a government not of force, but of opinion. The *reason* of the people must be satisfied before a call to arms. The mass of our peaceful and conscientious citizens cannot, and ought not, except in a clear case, to be urged to abandon the implements of industry for the sword and the bayonet. This consideration it is that imparts to intellectual preëminence in the service of truth its incalculable value. And hence the preciousness of that admirable and unanswerable exposition, which has put down, once and for ever, the artful sophisms of nullification.

"If, Gentlemen, we turn to other portions of the public history of our distinguished guest, it will be found that his claims to grateful acknowledgment are not less imposing. The cause of domestic industry, of internal improvement, of education, of whatever, in short, is calculated to render us a prosperous, united, and happy people, has found in him a watchful and efficient advocate. Nor is it the least of his merits, that to our gallant *Navy* Mr. Webster has been an early, far-sighted, and persevering friend. Our interior position cannot render us cold and unobservant on this point, whilst the victory of Perry yet supplies to us a proud and inspiring anniversary. And such is the wonderful chain of mutual dependence which binds our Union, that, in the remotest corner of the West, the exchangeable value of every product must depend on the security with which the ocean can be traversed.

"Gentlemen, I have detained you too long; yet I will add one word. I do but echo the language of the throngs that have crowded round Mr. Webster in declaring, that the frank and manly simplicity of his character and manners has created a feeling of personal regard which no mere intellectual ascendancy could have secured. We approached him with admiration for the achievements of his public career, never supposing for a moment that our hearts could have aught to do in the matter; we shall part as from a valued friend, the recollection of whose virtues cannot pass away."

MR. WEBSTER then addressed the assembly as follows:—

Reception at Pittsburg*

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN:— I rise, fellow-citizens, with unaffected sensibility, to give you my thanks for the hospitable manner in which you have been kind enough to receive me, on this my first visit to Pittsburg, and to make all due acknowledgments to your worthy Mayor, for the sentiments which he has now seen fit to express.

Although, Gentlemen, it has been my fortune to be personally acquainted with very few of you, I feel, at this moment, that we are not strangers. We are fellow-countrymen, fellow-citizens, bound together by a thousand ties of interest, of sympathy, of duty; united, I hope I may add, by bonds of mutual regard. We are bound together, for good or for evil, in our great political interests. I know that I am addressing Americans, every one of whom has a true American heart in his bosom; and I feel that I have also an American heart in *my* bosom. I address you, then, Gentlemen, with the same fervent good wishes for your happiness, the same brotherly affection, and the same feelings of regard and esteem, as if, instead of being upon the borders of the Ohio, I stood by the Connecticut or the Merri-mack. As citizens, countrymen, and neighbors, I give you my hearty good wishes, and thank you, over and over again, for your abundant hospitality.

Gentlemen, the Mayor has been pleased to advert, in terms beyond all expectation or merit of my own, to my services in defence of the glorious Constitution under which we live, and which makes you and me all that we are, and all that we desire to be. He has done much more than justice to my efforts; but

* Address delivered to the Citizens of Pittsburg, on the 8th of July, 1833.

he has not overstated the importance of the occasion on which those efforts were made.

Gentlemen, it is but a few short months since dark and portentous clouds *did* hang over our heavens, and *did* shut out, as it were, the sun in his glory. A new and perilous crisis was upon us. Dangers, novel in their character, and fearful in their aspect, menaced both the peace of the country and the integrity of the Constitution. For forty years our government had gone on, I need hardly say how prosperously and gloriously, meeting, it is true, with occasional dissatisfaction, and, in one or two instances, with ill-concerted resistance to law. Through all these trials it had successfully passed. But now a time had come when the authority of law was opposed by authority of law, when the power of the general government was resisted by the arms of State government, and when organized military force, under all the sanctions of State conventions and State laws, was ready to resist the collection of the public revenues, and hurl defiance at the statutes of Congress.

Gentlemen, this was an alarming moment. In common with all good citizens, I felt it to be such. A general anxiety pervaded the breasts of all who were, at home, partaking in the prosperity, honor, and happiness which the country had enjoyed. And how was it abroad? Why, Gentlemen, every intelligent friend of human liberty, throughout the world, looked with amazement at the spectacle which we exhibited. In a day of unparalleled prosperity, after a half-century's most happy experience of the blessings of our Union; when we had already become the wonder of all the liberal part of the world, and the envy of the illiberal; when the Constitution had so amply falsified the predictions of its enemies, and more than fulfilled all the hopes of its friends; in a time of peace, with an overflowing treasury; when both the population and the improvement of the country had outrun the most sanguine anticipations;—it was at this moment that we showed ourselves to the whole civilized world as being apparently on the eve of disunion and anarchy, at the very point of dissolving, once and for ever, that Union which had made us so prosperous and so great. It was at this moment that those appeared among us who seemed ready to break up the national Constitution, and to scatter the twenty-four States into twenty-four unconnected communities.

Gentlemen, the President of the United States was, as it seemed to me, at this eventful crisis, true to his duty. He comprehended and understood the case, and met it as it was proper to meet it. While I am as willing as others to admit that the President has, on other occasions, rendered important services to the country, and especially on that occasion which has given him so much military renown, I yet think the ability and decision with which he rejected the disorganizing doctrines of nullification create a claim, than which he has none higher, to the gratitude of the country and the respect of posterity. The appearance of the proclamation of the 10th of December inspired me, I confess, with new hopes for the duration of the republic. I regarded it as just, patriotic, able, and imperiously demanded by the condition of the country. I would not be understood to speak of particular clauses and phrases in the proclamation; but I regard its great and leading doctrines as the true and only true doctrines of the Constitution. They constitute the sole ground on which dismemberment can be resisted. Nothing else, in my opinion, can hold us together. While these opinions are maintained, the Union will last; when they shall be generally rejected and abandoned, that Union will be at the mercy of a temporary majority in any one of the States.

I speak, Gentlemen, on this subject, without reserve. I have not intended heretofore, and elsewhere, and do not now intend here, to stint my commendation of the conduct of the President in regard to the proclamation and the subsequent measures. I have differed with the President, as all know, who know any thing of so humble an individual as myself, on many questions of great general interest and importance. I differ with him in respect to the constitutional power of internal improvements; I differ with him in respect to the rechartering of the Bank, and I dissent, especially, from the grounds and reasons on which he refused his assent to the bill passed by Congress for that purpose. I differ with him, also, probably, in the degree of protection which ought to be afforded to our agriculture and manufactures, and in the manner in which it may be proper to dispose of the public lands. But all these differences afforded, in my judgment, not the slightest reason for opposing him in a measure of paramount importance, and at a moment of great public exigency. I sought to take counsel of nothing but patriotism,

to feel no impulse but that of duty, and to yield not a lame and hesitating, but a vigorous and cordial, support to measures which, in my conscience, I believed essential to the preservation of the Constitution. It is true, doubtless, that if myself and others had surrendered ourselves to a spirit of opposition, we might have embarrassed, and probably defeated, the measures of the administration. But in so doing, we should, in my opinion, have been false to our own characters, false to our duty, and false to our country. It gives me the highest satisfaction to know, that, in regard to this subject, the general voice of the country does not disapprove my conduct.

I ought to add, Gentlemen, that, in whatever I may have done or attempted in this respect, I only share a common merit. A vast majority of both houses of Congress cordially concurred in the measures. Your own great State was seen in her just position on that occasion, and your own immediate representatives were found among the most zealous and efficient friends of the Union.

Gentlemen, I hope that the result of that experiment may prove salutary in its consequences to our government, and to the interests of the community. I hope that the signal and decisive manifestation of public opinion, which has, for the time at least, put down the despotism of nullification, may produce permanent good effects. I know full well that popular topics may be urged against the proclamation. I know it may be said, in regard to the laws of the last session, that, if such laws are to be maintained, Congress may pass what laws they please, and enforce them. But may it not be said, on the other side, that, if a State may nullify one law, she may nullify any other law also, and, therefore, that the *principle* strikes at the whole power of Congress? And when it is said, that, if the power of State interposition be denied, Congress may pass and enforce what laws it pleases, is it meant to be contended or insisted, that the Constitution has placed Congress under the guardianship and control of the State legislatures? Those who argue against the power of Congress, from the possibility of its abuse, entirely forget that, if the power of State interposition be allowed, that power may be abused also. What is more material, they forget the will of the people, as they have plainly expressed it in the Constitution. They forget that *the people have*

chosen to give Congress a power of legislation, independent of State control. They forget that the Confederation has ceased, and that a *Constitution*, a *government*, has taken its place. They forget that this government is a popular government, that members of Congress are but agents and servants of the people, chosen for short periods, periodically removable by the people, as much subservient, as much dependent, as willingly obedient, as any other of their agents and servants. This dependence on the people is the security that they will not act wrong. This is the security which the people themselves have chosen to rely on, in addition to the guards contained in the Constitution itself.

I am quite aware, Gentlemen, that it is easy for those who oppose measures deemed necessary for the execution of the laws, to raise the cry of *consolidation*. It is easy to make charges, and to bring general accusations. It is easy to call names. For one, I repel all such imputations. I am no *consolidationist*. I disclaim the character altogether, and, instead of repeating this general and vague charge, I will be obliged to any one to show how the proclamation, or the late law of Congress, or, indeed, any measure to which I ever gave my support, tends, in the slightest degree, to consolidation. By consolidation is understood a grasping at power, on behalf of the general government, not constitutionally conferred. But the proclamation asserted no new power. It only asserted the right in the government to carry into effect, in the form of law, power which it had exercised for forty years. I should oppose any grasping at new powers by Congress, as zealously as the most zealous. I wish to preserve the Constitution as it is, without addition, and without diminution, by one jot or tittle. For the same reason that I would not grasp at powers not given, I would not surrender nor abandon powers which are given. Those who have placed me in a public station placed me there, not to alter the Constitution, but to administer it. The power of change the people have retained to themselves. *They* can alter, they can modify, they can change the Constitution entirely, if they see fit. *They* can tread it under foot, and make another, or make no other; but while it remains unaltered by the authority of the people, it is our power of attorney, our letter of credit, our credentials; and we are to follow it, and obey its injunctions, and maintain its just powers, to the best of our abilities.

I repeat, that, for one, I seek to preserve to the Constitution those precise powers with which the people have clothed it. While no encroachment is to be made on the reserved rights of the people or of the States, while nothing is to be usurped, it is equally clear that we are not at liberty to surrender, either in fact or form, any power or principle which the Constitution does actually contain.

And what is the ground for this cry of consolidation? I maintain that the measures recommended by the President, and adopted by Congress, were measures of self-defence. Is it consolidation to execute laws? Is it consolidation to resist the force that is threatening to upturn our government? Is it consolidation to protect officers, in the discharge of their duty, from courts and juries previously sworn to decide against them?

Gentlemen, I take occasion to remark, that, after much reflection upon the subject, and after all that has been said about the encroachment of the general government upon the rights of the States, I know of no one power, exercised by the general government, which was not, when that instrument was adopted, admitted by the immediate friends and foes of the Constitution to have been conferred upon it by the people. I know of no one power, now claimed or exercised, which every body did not agree, in 1789, was conferred on the general government. On the contrary, there are several powers, and those, too, among the most important for the interests of the people, which were then universally allowed to be conferred on Congress by the Constitution of the United States, and which are now ingeniously doubted, or clamorously denied.

Gentlemen, upon this point I shall detain you with no further remarks. It does, however, give me the most sincere pleasure to say, that, in a long visit through the State west of you, and the great State north of you, as well as in a tour of some days' duration in the respectable State to which you belong, I find but one sentiment in regard to the conduct of the government upon this subject. I know that those who have seen fit to intrust to me, in part, their interests in Congress, approve of the measures recommended by the President. We see that he has taken occasion, during the recess of Congress, to visit that part of the country; and we know how he has been received. Nowhere have hands been extended with more sincerity of

friendship ; and for one, Gentlemen, I take occasion to say, that, having heard of his return to the seat of government with health rather debilitated, it is among my most earnest prayers that Providence may spare his life, and that he may go through his administration and come out of it with as much success and glory as any of his predecessors.

Your worthy chief magistrate has been kind enough, Gentlemen, to express sentiments favorable to myself, as a friend of domestic industry. Domestic industry ! How much of national power and opulence, how much of individual comfort and respectability, that phrase implies ! And with what force does it strike us, as we stand here, at the confluence of the two rivers whose united currents constitute the Ohio, and in the midst of one of the most flourishing and distinguished manufacturing cities in the Union ! Many thousand miles of inland navigation, running through a new and rapidly-improving country, stretch away below us. Internal communications, completed or in progress, connect the city with the Atlantic and the Lakes. A hundred steam-engines are in daily operation, and nature has supplied the fuel which feeds their incessant flames on the spot itself, in exhaustless abundance. Standing here, Gentlemen, in the midst of such a population, and with such a scene around us, how great is the import of these words, "domestic industry" !

Next to the preservation of the government itself, there can hardly be a more vital question, to such a community as this, than that which regards their own employments, and the preservation of that policy which the government has adopted and cherished for the encouragement and protection of those employments. This is not, in a society like this, a matter which affects the interest of a particular class, but one which affects the interest of all classes. It runs through the whole chain of human occupation and employment, and touches the means of living and the comfort of all.

Gentlemen, those of you who may have turned your attention to the subject know, that, in the quarter of the country with which I am more immediately connected, the people were not early or eager to urge the government to carry the protective policy to the height which it has reached. Candor obliges me to remind you, that, when the act of 1824 was passed,

neither he who now addresses you, nor those with whom he usually acted on such subjects, were ready or willing to take the step which that act proposed. They doubted its *expediency*. It passed, however, by the great and overwhelming influence of the central States, New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. New England acquiesced in it. She conformed to it, as the settled policy of the country, and gave to her capital and her labor a corresponding direction. She has now become vitally interested in the preservation of the system. Her prosperity is identified, not perhaps with any particular degree of protection, but with the preservation of the principle; and she is not likely to consent to yield the principle, under any circumstances whatever. And who would dare to yield it? Who, standing here, and looking round on this community and its interests, would be bold enough to touch the spring which moves so much industry and produces so much happiness? Who would shut up the mouths of these vast coal-pits? Who would stay the cargoes of manufactured goods, now floating down a river, one of the noblest in the world, and stretching through territories almost boundless in extent and unequalled in fertility? Who would quench the fires of so many steam-engines, or check the operations of so much well-employed labor? Gentlemen, I cannot conceive how any subversion of that policy which has hitherto been pursued can take place, without great public embarrassment and great private distress.

I have said, that I am in favor of protecting American manual labor; and after the best reflection I can give the subject, and from the lights which I can derive from the experience of ourselves and others, I have come to the conclusion that such protection is just and proper; and that to leave American labor to sustain a competition with that of the over-peopled countries of Europe would lead to a state of things to which the people could never submit. This is the great reason why I am for maintaining what has been established. I see at home, I see here, I see wherever I go, that the stimulus which has excited the existing activity, and is producing the existing prosperity, of the country, is nothing else than the stimulus held out to labor by compensating prices. I think this effect is visible everywhere, from Penobscot to New Orleans, and manifest in the condition and circumstances of the great body of the people; for nine tenths of

the whole people belong to the laborious, industrious, and productive classes; and on these classes the stimulus acts. We perceive that the price of labor is high, and we know that the means of living are low; and these two truths speak volumes in favor of the general prosperity of the country. I am aware, as has been said already, that this high price of labor results partly from the favorable condition of the country. Labor was high, comparatively speaking, before the act of 1824 passed; but that fact affords no reason, in my judgment, for endangering its security and sacrificing its hopes, by overthrowing what has since been established for its protection.

Let us look, Gentlemen, to the condition of other countries, and inquire a little into the causes, which, in some of them, produce poverty and distress, the lamentations of which reach our own shores. I see around me many whom I know to be emigrants from other countries. Why are they here? Why is the native of Ireland among us? Why has he abandoned scenes as dear to him as these hills and these rivers are to you? Is there any other cause than this, that the burden of taxation on the one hand, and the low reward of labor on the other, left him without the means of a comfortable subsistence, or the power of providing for those who were dependent upon him? Was it not on this account that he left his own land, and sought an asylum in a country of free laws, of comparative exemption from taxation, of boundless extent, and in which the means of living are cheap, and the prices of labor just and adequate? And do not these remarks apply, with more or less accuracy, to every other part of Europe? Is it not true, that sobriety, and industry, and good character, can do more for a man here than in any other part of the world? And is not this truth, which is so obvious that none can deny it, founded in this plain reason, that labor in this country earns a better reward than anywhere else, and so gives more comfort, more individual independence, and more elevation of character? Whatever else may benefit particular portions of society, whatever else may assist capital, whatever else may favor sharp-sighted commercial enterprise, professional skill, or extraordinary individual sagacity or good fortune, be assured, Gentlemen, that nothing can advance the mass of society in prosperity and happiness, nothing can uphold the substantial interest and steadily improve the general condition and

character of the whole, but this one thing, *compensating rewards to labor*. The fortunate situation of our country tends strongly, of itself, to produce this result; the government has adopted the policy of coöperating with this natural tendency of things; it has encouraged and fostered labor and industry, by a system of discriminating duties; and the result of these combined causes may be seen in the present circumstances of the country.

Gentlemen, there are important considerations of another kind connected with this subject. Our government is popular; popular in its foundation, and popular in its exercise. The actual character of the government can never be better than the general moral and intellectual character of the community. It would be the wildest of human imaginations, to expect a poor, vicious, and ignorant people to maintain a good popular government. Education and knowledge, which, as is obvious, can be generally attained by the people only where there are adequate rewards to labor and industry, and some share in the public interest, some stake in the community, would seem indispensably necessary in those who have the power of appointing all public agents, passing all laws, and even of making and unmaking constitutions at their pleasure. Hence the truth of the trite maxim, that knowledge and virtue are the only foundation of republics. But it is to be added, and to be always remembered, that there never was, and never can be, an intelligent and virtuous people who at the same time are a poor and idle people, badly employed and badly paid. Who would be safe in any community, where political power is in the hands of the many and property in the hands of the few? Indeed, such an unnatural state of things could nowhere long exist.

It certainly appears to me, Gentlemen, to be quite evident at this time, and in the present condition of the world, that it is necessary to protect the industry of this country against the pauper labor of England and other parts of Europe. An American citizen, who has children to maintain and children to *educate*, has an unequal chance against the pauper of England, whose children are not to be educated, and are probably already on the parish, and who himself is half fed and clothed by his own labor, and half from the poor-rates, and very badly fed and clothed after all. As I have already said, the condition of our country of itself, without the aid of government, does much

to favor American manual labor; and it is a question of policy and justice, at all times, what and how much government shall do in aid of natural advantages. In regard to some branches of industry, the natural advantages are less considerable than in regard to others; and those, therefore, more imperiously demand the regard of government. Such are the occupations, generally speaking, of the numerous classes of citizens in cities and large towns; the workers in leather, brass, tin, iron, &c.; and such, too, under most circumstances, are the employments connected with ship-building.

Our own experience has been a powerful, and ought to be a convincing and long-remembered, preacher on this point. From the close of the war of the Revolution, there came on a period of depression and distress, on the Atlantic coast, such as the people had hardly felt during the sharpest crisis of the war itself. Ship-owners, ship-builders, mechanics, artisans, all were destitute of employment, and some of them destitute of bread. British ships came freely, and British goods came plentifully; while to American ships and American products there was neither protection on the one side, nor the equivalent of reciprocal free trade on the other. The cheaper labor of England supplied the inhabitants of the Atlantic shores with every thing. Ready-made clothes, among the rest, from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, were for sale in every city. All these things came free from any general system of imposts. Some of the States attempted to establish their own partial systems, but they failed. Voluntary association was resorted to, but that failed also. A memorable instance of this mode of attempting protection occurred in Boston. The ship-owners, seeing that British vessels came and went freely, while their own ships were rotting at the wharves, raised a committee to address the people, recommending to them, in the strongest manner, not to buy or use any articles imported in British ships. The chairman of this committee was no less distinguished a character than the immortal John Hancock. The committee performed its duty powerfully and eloquently. It set forth strong and persuasive reasons why the people should not buy or use British goods imported in British ships. The ship-owners and merchants having thus proceeded, the mechanics of Boston took up the subject also. They answered the merchants' committee. They agreed

with them cordially, that British goods, imported in British vessels, ought not to be bought or consumed; but then they took the liberty of going a step farther, and of insisting *that such goods ought not to be bought or consumed at all*. (Great applause.) "For," said they, "Mr. Hancock, what difference does it make to us, whether hats, shoes, boots, shirts, handkerchiefs, tin-ware, brass-ware, cutlery, and every other article, come in British ships or come in your ships; since, in whatever ships they come, they take away our means of living?"

Gentlemen, it is an historical truth, manifested in a thousand ways by the public proceedings and public meetings of the times, that the necessity of a general and uniform impost system, which, while it should provide revenue to pay the public debt, and foster the commerce of the country, should also encourage and sustain domestic manufactures, was the leading cause in producing the present national Constitution. No class of persons was more zealous for the new Constitution, than the handicraftsmen, artisans, and manufacturers. There were then, it is true, no large manufacturing establishments. There were no manufactories in the interior, for there were no inhabitants. Here was Fort Pitt,—it had a place on the map,—but here were no people, or only a very few. But in the cities and towns on the Atlantic, the full importance, indeed the absolute necessity, of a new form of government and a general system of imposts was deeply felt.

It so happened, Gentlemen, that at that time much was thought to depend on Massachusetts; several States had already agreed to the Constitution; if her convention adopted it, it was likely to go into operation. This gave to the proceedings of that convention an intense interest, and the country looked with trembling anxiety for the result. That result was for a long time doubtful. The convention was known to be almost equally divided; and down to the very day and hour of the final vote, no one could predict, with any certainty, which side would preponderate. It was under these circumstances, and at this crisis, that the tradesmen of the town of Boston, in January, 1788, assembled at the Green Dragon tavern, the place where the Whigs of the Revolution, in its early stages, had been accustomed to assemble. They resolved, that, in their opinion, if the Constitution should be adopted, "trade and navigation would

revive and increase, and employ and subsistence be afforded to many of their townsmen, then suffering for the want of the necessities of life"; and that, on the other hand, should it be rejected, "the small remains of commerce yet left would be annihilated; the various trades and handicrafts dependent thereon decay; the poor be increased, and many worthy and skilful mechanics compelled to seek employ and subsistence in strange lands." These resolutions were carried to the Boston delegates in the convention, and placed in the hands of Samuel Adams. That great and distinguished friend of American liberty, it was feared, might have doubts about the new Constitution. Naturally cautious and sagacious, it was apprehended he might fear the practicability, or the safety, of a general government. He received the resolutions from the hands of Paul Revere, a brass-founder by occupation, a man of sense and character, and of high public spirit, whom the mechanics of Boston ought never to forget. "How many mechanics," said Mr. Adams, "were at the Green Dragon when these resolutions were passed?" "More, Sir," was the reply, "than the Green Dragon could hold." "And where were the rest, Mr. Revere?" "In the streets, Sir." "And how many were in the streets?" "More, Sir, than there are stars in the sky." This is an instance only, among many, to prove, what is indisputably true, that the tradesmen and mechanics of the country did look to the new Constitution for encouragement and protection in their respective occupations. Under these circumstances, it is not to be expected that they will abandon the principle, in its application to their own employments, any more than in its application to the commercial and shipping interests. They believe the power is in the Constitution; and doubtless they mean, so far as depends on them, to keep it there. Desirous of no extravagant measure of protection, desirous of oppressing or burdening nobody, seeking nothing as a substitute for honest industry and hard work, as a part of the American family, having the same interests as other parts, they will continue their attachment to the Union and the Constitution, and to all the great and leading interests of the country.

Gentlemen, your worthy Mayor has alluded to the subject of internal improvements. Having no doubt of the power of the general government over various objects comprehended under

that name, I confess I have felt great pleasure in forwarding them, to the extent of my ability, by means of reasonable aid from the government. It has seemed strange to me, that, in the progress of human knowledge and human virtue (for I have no doubt that both are making progress), the efforts of government should so long have been principally confined to external affairs, and to the enactment of the general laws, without considering how much may be done by government, which cannot be done without it, for the improvement of the condition of the people. There are many objects, of great value to man, which cannot be attained by unconnected individuals, but must be attained, if at all, by association. For many of them government seems the most natural and the most efficient association. Voluntary association has done much, but it cannot do all. To the great honor and advantage of your own State, she has been forward in applying the agency of government to great objects of internal utility. But even States cannot do every thing. There are some things which belong to all the States; and, if done at all, must be done by all the States. At the conclusion of the late war, it appeared to me that the time had come for the government to turn its attention inward; to survey the condition of the country, and particularly the vast Western country; to take a comprehensive view of the whole; and to adopt a liberal system of internal improvements. There are objects not naturally within the sphere of any one State, which yet seemed of great importance, as calculated to unite the different parts of the country, to open a better and shorter way between the producer and consumer, to promise the highest advantage to government itself, in any exigency. It is true, Gentlemen, that the local theatre for such improvement is not mainly in the East. The East is old, pretty fully peopled, and small. The West is new, vast, and thinly peopled. Our rivers can be measured; yours cannot. We are bounded; you are boundless. The West was, therefore, most deeply interested in this system, though certainly not alone interested, even in such works as had a Western locality. To clear her rivers was to open them for the commerce of the whole country; to construct harbors, and clear entrances to existing harbors, whether on the Gulf of Mexico or on the Lakes, was for the advantage of that whole commerce. And if this were not so, he is but a poor public man whose pa-

triotism is governed by the cardinal points ; who is for or against a proposed measure, according to its indication by compass, or as it may happen to tend farther from, or come nearer to, his own immediate connections. And look at the West ; look at these rivers ; look at the Lakes ; look especially at Lake Erie, and see what a moderate expenditure has done for the safety of human life, and the preservation of property, in the navigation of that lake ; and done, let me add, in the face of a fixed and ardent opposition.

I rejoice, sincerely, Gentlemen, in the general progress of internal improvement, and in the completion of so many objects near you, and connected with your prosperity. Your own canal and railroad unite you with the Atlantic. Near you is the Ohio Canal, which does so much credit to a younger State, and with which your city will doubtless one day have a direct connection. On the south and east approaches the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, a great and spirited enterprise, which I always thought entitled to the aid of government, and a branch of which, it may be hoped, will yet reach the head of the Ohio.

I will only add, Gentlemen, that for what I have done in the cause of internal improvement I claim no particular merit, having only acted with others, and discharged, conscientiously and fairly, what I regarded as my duty to the whole country.

Gentlemen, the Mayor has spoken of the importance and necessity of education. And can any one doubt, that to man, as a social and an immortal being, as interested in the world that is, and infinitely more concerned for that which is to be, education, that is to say, the culture of the mind and the heart, is an object of infinite importance ? So far as we can trace the designs of Providence, the formation of the mind and character, by instruction in knowledge, and instruction in righteousness, is a main end of human being. Among the new impulses which society has received, none is more gratifying than the awakened attention to public education. That object begins to exhibit itself to the minds of men in its just magnitude, and to possess its due share of regard. It is but in a limited degree, and indirectly only, that the powers of the general government have been exercised in the promotion of this object. So far as these powers extend, I have concurred in their exercise with great pleasure. The Western States, from the recency of their

settlement, from the great proportion of their population which are children, and from other circumstances which must, in all new countries, more or less curtail individual means, have appeared to me to have peculiar claims to regard; and in all cases where I have thought the power clear, I have most heartily concurred in measures designed for their benefit, in this respect. And amidst all our efforts for education, literary, moral, or religious, be it always remembered that we leave opinion and conscience free. Heaven grant that it may be the glory of the United States to have established two great truths, of the highest importance to the whole human race; first, that an enlightened community *is* capable of self-government; and, second, that the toleration of all sects does *not* necessarily produce indifference to religion.

But I have already detained you too long. My friends, fellow-citizens, and countrymen, I take a respectful leave of you. The time I have passed on this side the Alleghanies has been a succession of happy days. I have seen much to instruct and much to delight me. I return you, again and again, my unfeigned thanks for the frankness and hospitality with which you have made me welcome; and wherever I may go, or wherever I may be, I pray you to believe I shall not lose the recollection of your kindness.

Reception at Bangor

Reception at Bangor*

DURING a visit to Maine, in the summer of 1835, on business connected with his profession, Mr. Webster was at Bangor, where he partook of a collation with many of the citizens of that place. There were so many more people, however, desirous to see and hear him than could be accommodated in the hall of the hotel, that, after the cloth was removed, he was compelled to proceed to the balcony, where, after thanking the company for their hospitality, and their manifestation of regard, he addressed the assembly as follows : —

HAVING occasion to come into the State on professional business, I have gladly availed myself of the opportunity to visit this city, the growing magnitude and importance of which have recently attracted such general notice. I am happy to say, that I see around me ample proofs of the correctness of the favorable representations which have gone abroad. Your city, Gentlemen, has certainly experienced an extraordinary growth; and it is a growth, I think, which there is reason to hope is not unnatural, or greatly disproportionate to the eminent advantages of the place. It so happened, that, at an early period of my life, I came to this spot, attracted by that favorable position, which the slightest glance on the map must satisfy every one that it occupies. It is near the head of tide-water, on a river which brings to it from the sea a volume of water equal to the demands of the largest vessels of war, and whose branches, uniting here, from great distances above, traverse in their course extensive tracts now covered with valuable productions of the forest, and capable, most of them, of profitable agricultural cultivation. But at the period I speak of, the time had not come

* Remarks made to the Citizens of Bangor, Maine, on the 25th of August, 1835.

for the proper development and display of these advantages. Neither the place itself, nor the country, was then ready. A long course of commercial restrictions and embargo, and a foreign war, were yet to be gone through, before the local advantages of such a spot could be exhibited or enjoyed, or the country would be in a condition to create an active demand for its main products.

I believe some twelve or twenty houses were all that Bangor could enumerate, when I was in it before; and I remember to have crossed the stream which now divides your fair city on some floating logs, for the purpose of visiting a former friend and neighbor, who had just then settled here; a gentleman always most respectable, and now venerable for his age and his character, whom I have great pleasure in seeing among you to-day, in the enjoyment of health and happiness.

It is quite obvious, Gentlemen, that while the local advantages of a noble river, and of a large surrounding country, may be justly considered as the original spring of the present prosperity of the city, the current of this prosperity has, nevertheless, been put in motion, enlarged, and impelled, by the general progress of improvement, and growth of wealth throughout the whole country.

At the period of my former visit, there was, of course, neither railroad, nor steamboat, nor canal, to favor communication; nor do I recollect that any public or stage coach came within fifty miles of the town.

Internal improvement (as it is comprehensively called in this country) has been the great agent of this favorable change; and so blended are our interests, that the general activity which exists elsewhere, supported and stimulated by internal improvement, pervades and benefits even those portions of the country which are locally remote from the immediate scene of the main operations of this improvement. Whatever promotes communication, whatsoever extends general business, whatsoever encourages enterprise, or whatsoever advances the general wealth and prosperity of other States, must have a plain, direct, and powerful bearing on your own prosperity. In truth, there is no town in the Union, whose hopes can be more directly staked on the general prosperity of the country, than this rising city. If any thing should interrupt the general operations of business,

if commercial embarrassment, foreign war, pecuniary derangement, domestic dissension, or any other causes, were to arrest the general progress of the public welfare, all must see with what a blasting and withering effect such a course must operate on Bangor.

Gentlemen, I have often taken occasion to say, what circumstances may render it proper now to repeat, that, at the close of the last war, a new era, in my judgment, had opened in the United States. A new career then lay before us. At peace ourselves with the nations of Europe, and those nations, too, at peace with one another, and the leading civilized states of the world no longer allowing that carrying trade which had been the rich harvest of our neutrality in the midst of former wars, but all now coming forward to exercise their own rights, in sharing the commerce and navigation of the world, it seemed to me to be very plain, that, while our commerce was still to be fostered with the most zealous care, yet quite a new view of things was presented to us in regard to our internal pursuits and concerns. The works of peace, as it seemed to me, had become our duties. A hostile exterior, a front of brass, and an arm of iron, all necessary in the just defence of the country against foreign aggression, naturally gave place, in a change of circumstances, to the attitude, the objects, and the pursuits of peace. Our true interest, as I thought, was to explore our own resources, to call forth and encourage labor and enterprise upon internal objects, to multiply the sources of employment and comfort at home, and to unite the country by ties of intercourse, commerce, benefits, and prosperity, in all parts, as well as by the ties of political association. And it appeared to me that government itself clearly possessed the power, and was as clearly charged with the duty of helping on, in various ways, this great business of internal improvement. I have, therefore, steadily supported all measures directed to that end, which appeared to me to be within the just power of the government, and to be practicable within the limits of reasonable expenditure. And if any one would judge how far the fostering of this spirit has been beneficial to the country, let him compare its state at this moment with its condition at the commencement of the late war; and let him then say how much of all that has been added to national wealth and national strength, and to individual pros-

perity and happiness, has been the fair result of internal improvement.

Gentlemen, it has been your pleasure to give utterance to sentiments expressing approbation of my humble efforts, on several occasions, in defence and maintenance of the Constitution of the country. I have nothing to say of those efforts, except that they have been honestly intended. The country sees no reason, I trust, to suppose that on those occasions I have taken counsel of any thing but a deep sense of duty. I have, on some occasions, felt myself called on to maintain my opinions, in opposition to power, to place, to official influence and to overwhelming personal popularity. I have thought it my imperative duty to put forth my most earnest efforts to maintain what I considered to be the just powers of the government, when it appeared to me that those to whom its administration was intrusted were countenancing doctrines inevitably tending to its destruction. And I have, with far more pleasure, on other occasions, supported the constituted authorities, when I have deemed their measures to be called for by a regard to its preservation.

The Constitution of the United States, Gentlemen, has appeared to me to have been formed and adopted for two grand objects. The first is the Union of the States. It is the bond of that union, and it states and defines its terms. Who can speak in terms warm enough and high enough of its importance in this respect, or the admirable wisdom with which it is formed? Or who, when he shall have stated the benefits and blessings which it has conferred upon the States most strongly, will venture to say that he has done it justice? For one, I am not sanguine enough to believe that, if this bond of union were dissolved, any other tie uniting all the States would take its place for generations to come. It requires no common skill, it is no piece of ordinary political journey-work, to form a system which shall hold together four-and-twenty separate State sovereignties, the line of whose united territories runs down all the parallels of latitude from New Brunswick to the Gulf of Mexico, and whose connected breadth stretches from the sea far beyond the Mississippi. Nor are all times or all occasions suited to such great operations. It is only under the most favorable circumstances, and only when great men are called on to meet great

exigencies, only once in centuries, that such fortunate political results are to be attained. Whoever, therefore, undervalues this National Union, whoever depreciates it, whoever accustoms himself to consider how the people might get on without it, appears to me to encourage sentiments subversive of the foundations of our prosperity.

It is true that these twenty-four States are, more or less, different in climate, productions, and local pursuits. There are planting States, grain-growing States, manufacturing States, and commercial States. But those several interests, if not identical, are not therefore inconsistent and hostile. Far from it. They unite, on the contrary, to promote an aggregate result of unrivalled national happiness. It is not precisely a case in which

“ All nature’s difference keeps all nature’s peace ” ;

but it is a case in which variety of climate and condition, and diversities of pursuits and productions, all unite to exhibit one harmonious, grand, and magnificent whole, to which the world may be proudly challenged to show an equal. In my opinion, no man, in any corner of any one of these States, can stand up and declare, that he is less prosperous or less happy than if the general government had never existed. Entertaining these sentiments, and feeling their force most deeply, I regard it as the bounden duty of every good citizen, in public and in private life, to follow the admonition of Washington, and to cherish that Union which makes us one people. I most earnestly deprecate, therefore, whatever occurs, in the government or out of it, calculated to endanger the Union or disturb the basis on which it rests.

Another object of the Constitution I take to be such as is common to all written constitutions of free governments ; that is, to fix limits to delegated authority, or, in other words, to impose constitutional restraints on political power. Some, who esteem themselves republicans, seem to think no other security for public liberty necessary than a provision for a popular choice of rulers. If political power be delegated power, they entertain little fear of its being abused. The people’s servants and favorites, they think, may be safely trusted. Our fathers, certainly, were not of this school. They sought to make assurance

doubly sure, by providing, in the first place, for the election of political agents by the people themselves, at short intervals, and, in the next place, by prescribing constitutional restraints on all branches of this delegated authority. It is not among the circumstances of the times most ominous for good, that a diminished estimate appears to be placed on those constitutional securities. A disposition is but too prevalent to substitute personal confidence for legal restraint; to put trust in men rather than in principles; and this disposition being strongest, as it most obviously is, whenever party spirit prevails to the greatest extent, it is not without reason that fears are entertained of the existence of a spirit tending strongly to an unlimited, if it be but an elective, government.

Surely, Gentlemen, this government can go through no such change. Long before that change could take place, the Constitution would be shattered to pieces, and the Union of the States become matter of past history. To the Union, therefore, as well as to civil liberty, to every interest which we enjoy and value, to all that makes us proud of our country, or which renders our country lovely in our own eyes, or dear to our own hearts, nothing can be more repugnant, nothing more hostile, nothing more directly destructive, than excessive, unlimited, unconstitutional confidence in men; nothing worse, than the doctrine that official agents may interpret the public will in their own way, in defiance of the Constitution and the laws; or that they may set up any thing for the declaration of that will except the Constitution and the laws themselves; or that any public officer, high or low, should undertake to constitute himself or to call himself *the representative of the people*, except so far as the Constitution and the laws create and denominate him such representative. There is no usurpation so dangerous as that which comes in the borrowed name of the people. If from some other authority, or other source, prerogatives be attempted to be enforced *upon* the people, they naturally oppose and resist it. It is an open enemy, and they can easily subdue it. But that which professes to act in their own name, and by their own authority, that which calls itself their servant, although it exercises their power without legal right or constitutional sanction, requires something more of vigilance to detect, and something more of stern patriotism to repress; and if it be not seasonably both de-

tected and repressed, then the republic is already in the downward path of those which have gone before it.

I hold, therefore, Gentlemen, that a strict submission, by every branch of the government, to the limitations and restraints of the Constitution, is of the very essence of all security for the preservation of liberty; and that no one can be a true and intelligent friend of that liberty, who will consent that any man in public station, whatever he may think of the honesty of his motives, shall assume to exercise an authority above the Constitution and the laws. Whatever government is not a government of laws, is a despotism, let it be called what it may.

Gentlemen, on an occasion like this, I ought not to detain you longer. Let us hope for the best, in behalf of this great and happy country, and of our glorious Constitution. Indeed, Gentlemen, we may well congratulate ourselves that the country is so young, so fresh, and so vigorous, that it can bear a great deal of bad government. It can take an enormous load of official mismanagement on its shoulders, and yet go ahead. Like the vessel impelled by steam, it can move forward, not only without other than the ordinary means, but even when those means oppose it; it can make its way in defiance of the elements, and

“Against the wind, against the tide,
Still steady, with an upright keel.”

There are some things, however, which the country cannot stand. It cannot stand any shock of civil liberty, or any disruption of the Union. Should either of these happen, the vessel of the state will have no longer either steerage or motion. She will lie on the billows helpless and hopeless, the scorn and contempt of all the enemies of free institutions, and an object of indescribable grief to all their friends.

Presentation of a Vase

Introductory Note

A LARGE number of the citizens of Boston being desirous to offer to Mr. Webster some enduring testimony of their gratitude for his services in Congress, and more especially for his defence of the Constitution during the crisis of Nullification, a committee was raised, in the spring of 1835, to procure a piece of plate which should be worthy of such an object. By their direction, and more particularly under the superintendence of one of their number, the late Mr. George W. Brimmer, to whose taste and skill the committee were deeply indebted for the selection of the model and the arrangement of the devices, the beautiful vase, now well known throughout the country as the WEBSTER VASE, was prepared at the manufactory of Messrs. Jones, Lows, & Ball, in Boston. After it was finished, the committee found it impossible to withstand the wish, both of the numerous subscribers and of the public generally, to witness the ceremonies and hear the remarks by which its presentation might be accompanied. It was accordingly presented to Mr. Webster in the presence of three or four thousand spectators, assembled at the Odeon, on the evening of the 12th of October. The Vase was placed on a pedestal covered with the American flag, and contained on its front the following inscription : —

PRESENTED TO
DANIEL WEBSTER
THE DEFENDER OF THE CONSTITUTION,
BY THE CITIZENS OF BOSTON,
Oct. 12, 1835

The chairman of the committee (Mr. Z. Jellison) opened the meeting with the following remarks : —

“ FELLOW-CITIZENS : — The friends of the Hon. Daniel Webster in this city, conceiving the propriety of giving that gentleman an expression of the high estimation in which they hold his public services, and wishing

also to tender him a testimonial of their regard for his moral worth and social virtues, called a meeting of consultation on the subject, some months since, at which a committee was appointed, with instructions to procure a suitable piece of plate, to be presented to him in their behalf, before his official duty should again require his departure hence for the seat of government. In obedience to their instructions, that committee have procured, from the hands of the most skilful artists in this country, the piece of plate I now have the honor to exhibit to you.

"They have now called their constituents together, for the purpose of presenting this Vase in their presence. Had the committee consulted the wishes only of the gentleman for whom it is intended, this presentation might, perhaps, have taken place in a more private or less imposing manner; but, in the course they have adopted, they have been governed by the wishes of the citizens at large. They now respectfully ask your kind indulgence while they proceed in the discharge of this part of their duty.

"The committee have appointed, as their organ of communication, the Hon. Francis C. Gray, with whom I now have the pleasure to leave the subject."

Mr. GRAY then rose, and spoke as follows: —

"MR. WEBSTER: — By direction of the committee, and in behalf of your fellow-citizens, who have caused this Vase to be made, I now request your acceptance of it. They offer it in token of their high sense of your public character and services. But on these it were not becoming to dwell in addressing yourself. Nor is a regard for these the only, or the principal, motive of those for whom I speak. They offer it mainly to evince the high estimation in which they hold the political sentiments and principles which you have professed and maintained. There may undoubtedly be differences of opinion among them with regard to this or that particular measure; and a blind, indiscriminate, wholesale adhesion to the life and opinions of any one would not be worth offering, nor worth accepting, among freemen. We are not man-worshippers here in Massachusetts. But the great political principles, the leading views of policy, which you have been forward to assert and vindicate, these they all unite to honor; and in rendering public homage to these, they feel that they are not so much paying a compliment to you, as performing a duty to their country.

"In a free republic, where all men exercise political power, the prevalence of correct views and principles on political subjects is essential to the safety of the state. It is not enough that their truth should be recognized. Their operation and tendency must be understood and appreciated; they must be made familiar to the mass of the people, become closely interwoven with their whole habits of thought and feeling, objects of attachment to which they may cling instantly and instinctively in all time of doubt or peril, so as not to be swept away by any sudden flood of prejudice or passion. Hence it is the duty of every man to embrace all fit occasions, nay, to seek fit occasions, for declaring his adherence to such principles, and giving them the support of his influence, however high or however humble that influence may be. There is no justice, therefore, in the complaint often made against the members of our legis-

lative assemblies, that they sometimes speak not for their audience merely, but for their constituents; seeking not simply to affect the decision of the question then pending, but to influence the public sentiment with regard to the principles involved in it. This affords no ground of censure against them, so they speak well and wisely. The practice may be abused, no doubt; but, in itself, it is a natural, inevitable right. So it should be in relation to all important principles in a free country. Nothing else but the excitement, kindled by the conflict of debate, will ever make those great principles subjects of general attention and interest. Nothing else but the observation of their application in practice can make them generally understood and appreciated. We all recollect questions (and among them that on Mr. Foot's resolutions, not likely soon to be forgotten), the vote on which was as certainly known before the discussion as after it, and known to be unalterable by any argument or persuasion; and yet the discussion of which was so far from being uninteresting and unprofitable, that it was echoed and reëchoed through the land, making a deep and lasting impression on the public mind, establishing incontrovertibly vital principles before disputed, and thus giving new strength and stability to our free institutions, and forming, I may almost say, an epoch in our political history.

"On this and similar occasions, not to dwell on your steadfast adherence to those more general principles of civil liberty, which are equally important in every age and country, — on such occasions the fundamental principles peculiar to our system of government have always had in you a decided advocate, ever ready to develop and illustrate their nature and operation, and to enforce the obligations which they impose. Among the most prominent peculiarities of our system is the fact that the United States are not a confederacy of independent sovereigns, the subjects of each of whom are responsible to him alone for their compliance with the obligations of the compact, but that, for certain specified purposes, they form one nation, every citizen of which is responsible, directly, immediately, exclusively, to the whole nation for the performance of his duties to the whole; that the Constitution is not a treaty, nor any thing like a treaty, but a frame of government, resting on the same foundations, and supported by the same sanctions, as any other government, to be subverted only by the same means, by revolution, — revolution to be brought about by the same authority which would warrant a revolution in any government, and by none other, — to be justified, when justifiable, by the same paramount necessity, and by nothing less. This government is not the government of the States, but that of the people; and it behooves the people, every one of the people, to do his utmost to preserve it; not in form merely, but in its full efficiency, as a practical system; to maintain the Union as it is, in all its integrity, — the Constitution as it is, in all its purity, and in all its strength; and when they are in danger, to hasten to their support promptly, frankly, fearlessly, undeterred, and unencumbered by any political combination, let who will be his companions in the good cause, and let who will hang back from it.

"The other great peculiarity of our political system — and on these two hang all the liberty and hopes of America — is this: that the supreme power or sovereignty is divided between the State and national govern-

ments, and the portion allotted to each distributed among several independent departments; and this, notwithstanding the maxim of European politicians, too hastily adopted by some of our own statesmen, that sovereignty is, in its nature, indivisible. By sovereignty, I do not mean, and they do not mean, the ultimate right of the people to establish and subvert governments, the right of revolution, as it has been called; for, thus understood, it would be absurd to inquire, as they constantly do, where the sovereignty resides in any particular government, since this ultimate sovereignty never can reside anywhere but in the people themselves. It is inherent in them and inalienable, existing equally as a right, however its exercise may be impeded, in free and despotic governments. But by sovereignty must be understood the supreme power of the government, the highest power which can lawfully be exercised by any constituted authority. Now, let the politicians of Europe say what they will of the indivisibility of this power, we know that, among us, it is in point of fact divided; that in relation to some objects, the supreme power is in the national government, subject to no earthly control but that of the people, exercising their right of revolution; and that in relation to others, it is in the State governments, subject to the same and to no other control; and that in each of these governments the power conferred is divided among the legislative, executive, and judicial departments, each of which is entirely independent in the performance of its appropriate duties.

"This system of practical checks and balances, altogether peculiar to us, is designed to operate, and does operate, for the restraint of power and the protection of liberty. But, like every earthly good, it brings with it its attendant evil in the danger of encroachment and collision. To guard against these dangers is one of the most important, most difficult, most delicate of our public duties; to see that the national government shall not encroach upon the power of the States, nor the States on that of the nation; that no State shall interfere with the domestic legislation of another, nor lightly nor unjustly suspect another of seeking to interfere with its own; but that each of these several governments, and every department in each, shall be strictly confined to its proper sphere; that no one shall evade any responsibility which is imposed on him by the Constitution and the laws, and no one assume any responsibility which is not so.

"But by what power can this be accomplished? There is only one. Physical force will not do it. The system of our government has been compared to that of the heavenly bodies, which move on, orb within orb cycle within cycle, in apparent confusion, but in real, uninterrupted, unalterable harmony. And the harmony of our system can only be maintained by a power, which, like that regulating their movements, is unseen, unfelt, yet irresistible, — *Public Opinion*.

"This is the precise circumstance which renders the prevalence of just political views and principles peculiarly important among us, and secures to him, who labors faithfully and successfully to promote their diffusion, the praise of having deserved well of his country.

"The opinions of men, however, are invariably and inevitably affected by their interests and their feelings. This consideration opens a wide field of duty to the American statesman, requiring him to prevent, by

every means in his power, all collisions of interest and all exasperations of feeling ; to correct and rebuke the misrepresentations which tend to array one part of the country against another, or one portion of society against another, as if their interests were adverse, whereas in truth they are one ; and, avoiding the paltry cunning which plays off the different parts of the country against each other, sacrificing the interests of the whole to this part to-day, on condition that they shall be sacrificed to another to-morrow, by which means they are always sacrificed, to be governed by that liberal, enlightened, far-sighted policy, which in all questions of expediency looks invariably and exclusively to the permanent interests of the whole nation, considered as one,—which aims to impress on the minds and the hearts of this people, deeply, indelibly, the great truth, that the prosperity and the glory of the United States, their improvement and happiness at home, their rank among the nations of the earth, must be proportioned to the strength and cordiality of their union, and can only be carried to their highest pitch by the universal conviction, the deep-seated and overruling sentiment, that, for the purposes set forth in the Constitution, we are one people, one and indivisible ; and that for us to break the bond that makes us one, and resolve this glorious Union into its original elements, would be as mad and as fatal as for England to go back again to her Heptarchy.

“ The statesman who is governed by these principles and this policy, whose great object is not to win the spoils of victory, nor even its laurels, but to fight the good fight and render faithful service to his country, will never want opportunity to merit the public gratitude, whatever may be his political position. If in the majority, considering that the duration of any administration is only a day in the existence of the government, and yet a day which must affect all that are to follow it, he will never be tempted to swerve from these great principles by any temporary advantage, even to the whole community, still less by any local or partial benefit, and least of all by any party or personal consideration. He will not make it the chief object of government to extend and perpetuate the power of his party. He will not regard his political opponents as enemies, over whom he has triumphed and whom he is to despoil. He will not seek to throw off or evade the restraints imposed by the Constitution on all power, nor will he bestow public offices as the reward or the motive for adherence to his party or his person. If in the minority, he will find inducement enough and reward enough for the most strenuous exertion, in the conviction, that an intelligent, resolute, vigilant minority is not utterly powerless in our government, but may often control, modify, or even arrest the most pernicious schemes of reckless rulers, and diminish, if not prevent, the evils of misrule. He will consider also, that in political science, as in the other moral sciences, truth must always force its way slowly against general opposition, and that although the great principles for which he contends should not triumph in the debate of the day, they may yet, if ably sustained, ultimately triumph in the hearts of the people, and come at last to rule the land ; and that thenceforward, so long as their beneficent influence shall endure, so long as they shall be remembered upon earth, so long will his name and his praise endure who shall have watched over them in their weakness, and struggled for them in their adversity.

“ But I must not be tempted beyond the tone which befits the part assigned me, which is simply to state the motives and feelings of those for whom I speak on this occasion ; and I am sure, Gentlemen, that I am the faithful interpreter of your sentiments, when I say, that it is from attachment to the great principles of civil liberty and constitutional government, that you offer this token of respect to one who has always maintained them and been governed by them ; to one whom this people, because he has been guided by those principles, and for the sake of those principles, delight to honor ; whom they honor with their confidence, whom they honor by cherishing the memory of his past services, and by their best hopes and wishes for the future, and whom they will honor, let who else may shrink and falter, by their cordial efforts to raise him to that high station for which so many patriotic citizens, in various parts of the country, are now holding him up as a candidate ; and they will do this on the full conviction, that he will always be true to those principles, wherever his country may call him.”

To this address Mr. WEBSTER made the following reply.

Vase.

“Presented to Daniel Webster, Defender of the Constitution of the
United States. From Citizens of Boston, October 12, 1835.”

Now in the Boston Public Library



Presentation of a Vase*

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN:— I accept, with grateful respect, the present which it is your pleasure to make. I value it. It bears an expression of your regard for those political principles which I have endeavored to maintain; and though the material were less costly, or the workmanship less elegant, any durable evidence of your approbation could not but give me high satisfaction.

* This approbation is the more gratifying, as it is not bestowed for services connected with local questions, or local interests, or which are supposed to have been peculiarly beneficial to yourselves, but for efforts which had the interests of the whole country for their object, and which were useful, if useful at all, to all who live under the blessings of the Constitution and government of the United States.

It is twelve or thirteen years, Gentlemen, since I was honored with a seat in Congress, by the choice of the citizens of Boston. They saw fit to repeat that choice more than once; and I embrace, with pleasure, this opportunity of expressing to them my sincere and profound sense of obligation for these manifestations of confidence. At a later period, the Legislature of the State saw fit to transfer me to another place;† and have again renewed the trust, under circumstances which I have felt to impose upon me new obligations of duty, and an increased devotion to the political welfare of the country. These twelve or thirteen years, Gentlemen, have been years of labor, and not without sacrifices; but both have been more than compensated

* Speech delivered in the Odeon, at Boston, on Occasion of the Presentation of a Vase by Citizens of that Place, on the 12th of October, 1835.

† The Senate of the United States.

by the kindness, the good-will, and the favorable interpretation with which my discharge of official duties has been received. In this changing world, we can hardly say that we possess what is present, and the future is all unknown. But the past is ours. Its acquisitions, and its enjoyments, are safe. And among these acquisitions, among the treasures of the past most to be cherished and preserved, I shall ever reckon the proofs of esteem and confidence which I have received from the citizens of Boston and the Legislature of Massachusetts.

In one respect, Gentlemen, your present oppresses me. It overcomes me by its tone of commendation. It assigns to me a character of which I feel I am not worthy. "The Defender of the Constitution" is a title quite too high for me. He who shall prove himself the ablest among the able men of the country, he who shall serve it longest among those who may serve it long, he on whose labors all the stars of benignant fortune shall shed their selectest influence, will have praise enough, and reward enough, if, at the end of his political and earthly career, though that career may have been as bright as the track of the sun across the sky, the marble under which he sleeps, and that much better record, the grateful breasts of his living countrymen, shall pronounce him "the Defender of the Constitution." It is enough for me, Gentlemen, to be connected, in the most humble manner, with the defence and maintenance of this great wonder of modern times, and this certain wonder of all future times. It is enough for me to stand in the ranks, and only to be counted as one of its defenders.

The Constitution of the United States, I am confident, will protect the name and the memory both of its founders and of its friends, even of its humblest friends. It will impart to both something of its own ever memorable and enduring distinction; I had almost said, something of its own everlasting remembrance. Centuries hence, when the vicissitudes of human affairs shall have broken it, if ever they shall break it, into fragments, these very fragments, every shattered column, every displaced foundation-stone, shall yet be sure to bring them all into recollection, and attract to them the respect and gratitude of mankind.

Gentlemen, it is to pay respect to this Constitution, it is to manifest your attachment to it, your sense of its value, and your

devotion to its true principles, that you have sought this occasion. It is not to pay an ostentatious personal compliment. If it were, it would be unworthy both of you and of me. It is not to manifest attachment to individuals, independent of all considerations of principles; if it were, I should feel it my duty to tell you, friends as you are, that you were doing that which, at this very moment, constitutes one of the most threatening dangers to the Constitution itself. Your gift would have no value in my eyes, this occasion would be regarded by me as an idle pageant, if I did not know that they are both but modes, chosen by you, to signify your attachment to the true principles of the Constitution; your fixed purpose, so far as in you lies, to maintain those principles; and your resolution to support public men, and stand by them, so long as they shall support and stand by the Constitution of the country, and no longer.

“The Constitution of the country!” Gentlemen, often as I am called to contemplate this subject, its importance always rises, and magnifies itself more and more, before me. I cannot view its preservation as a concern of narrow extent, or temporary duration. On the contrary, I see in it a vast interest, which is to run down with the generations of men, and to spread over a great portion of the earth with a direct, and over the rest with an indirect, but a most powerful influence. When I speak of it here, in this thick crowd of fellow-citizens and friends, I yet behold, thronging about me, a much larger and more imposing crowd. I see a united rush of the present and the future. I see all the patriotic of our own land, and our own time. I see also the many millions of their posterity, and I see, too, the lovers of human liberty from every part of the earth, from beneath the oppressions of thrones, and hierarchies, and dynasties, from amidst the darkness of ignorance, degradation, and despotism, into which any ray of political light has penetrated; I see all those countless multitudes gather about us, and I hear their united and earnest voices, conjuring us, in whose charge the treasure now is, to hold on, and hold on to the last, by that which is our own highest enjoyment and their best hope.

Filled with these sentiments, Gentlemen, and having through my political life hitherto always acted under the deepest conviction of their truth and importance, it is natural that I should have regarded the preservation of the Constitution as the first

great political object to be secured. But I claim no exclusive merit. I should deem it, especially, both unbecoming and unjust in me to separate myself, in this respect, from other public servants of the people of Massachusetts. The distinguished gentlemen who have preceded and followed me in the representation of the city, their associates from other districts of the State, and my late worthy and most highly esteemed colleague, are entitled, one and all, to a full share in the public approbation. If accidental circumstances, or a particular position, have sometimes rendered me more prominent, equal patriotism and equal zeal have yet made them equally deserving. It were invidious to enumerate these fellow-laborers, or to discriminate among them. Long may they live! and I could hardly express a better wish for the interest and honor of the States, than that the public men who may follow them may be as disinterested, as patriotic, and as able as they have proved themselves.

There have been, Gentlemen, it is true, anxious moments. That was an anxious occasion, to which the gentleman who has addressed me in your behalf has alluded; I mean the debate in January, 1830. It seemed to me then that the Constitution was about to be abandoned. Threatened with most serious dangers, it was not only not defended, but attacked, as I thought, and weakened and wounded in its vital powers and faculties, by those to whom the country naturally looks for its defence and protection. It appeared to me that the Union was about to go to pieces, before the people were at all aware of the extent of the danger. The occasion was not sought, but forced upon us; it seemed to me momentous, and I confess that I felt that even the little that I could do, in such a crisis, was called for by every motive which could be addressed to a lover of the Constitution. I took a part in the debate, therefore, with my whole heart already in the subject, and careless for every thing in the result, except the judgment which the people of the United States should form upon the questions involved in the discussion. I believe that judgment has been definitely pronounced; but nothing is due to me, beyond the merit of having made an earnest effort to present the true question to the people, and to invoke for it that attention from them, which its high importance appeared to me to demand.

The Constitution of the United States, Gentlemen, is of a peculiar structure. Our whole system is peculiar. It is fash-

ioned according to no existing model, likened to no precedent, and yet founded on principles which lie at the foundations of all free governments, wherever such governments exist. It is a complicated system. It is elaborate, and in some sense artificial, in its composition. We have twenty-four State sovereignties, all exercising legislative, judicial, and executive powers. Some of the sovereignties, or States, had long existed, and, subject only to the restraint of the power of the parent country, had been accustomed to the forms and to the exercise of the powers of representative republics. Others of them are new creations, coming into existence only under the Constitution itself; but all now standing on an equal footing.

The general government, under which all these States are united, is not, as has been justly remarked by Mr. Gray, a confederation. It is much more than a confederation. It is a popular representative government, with all the departments, and all the functions and organs, of such a government. But it is still a limited, a restrained, a severely-guarded government. It exists under a written constitution, and all that human wisdom could do is done, to define its powers and to prevent their abuse. It is placed in what was supposed to be the safest medium between dangerous authority on the one hand, and debility and inefficiency on the other. I think that happy medium was found, by the exercise of the greatest political sagacity, and the influence of the highest good fortune. We cannot move the system either way, without the probability of hurtful change; and as experience has taught us its safety, and its usefulness, when left where it is, our duty is a plain one.

It cannot be doubted that a system thus complicated must be accompanied by more or less of danger, in every stage of its existence. It has not the simplicity of despotism. It is not a plain column, that stands self-poised and self-supported. Nor is it a loose, irregular, unfixed, and undefined system of rule, which admits of constant and violent changes, without losing its character. But it is a balanced and guarded system; a system of checks and controls; a system in which powers are carefully delegated, and as carefully limited; a system in which the symmetry of the parts is designed to produce an aggregate whole, which shall be favorable to personal liberty, favorable to public prosperity, and favorable to national glory. And who can deny,

that, by a trial of fifty years, this American system of government has proved itself capable of conferring all these blessings? These years have been years of great agitation throughout the civilized world. In the course of them the face of Europe has been completely changed. Old and corrupt governments have been destroyed, and new ones, erected in their places, have been destroyed too, sometimes in rapid succession. Yet, through all the extraordinary, the most extraordinary scenes of this half-century, the free, popular, representative government of the United States has stood, and has afforded security for liberty, for property, and for reputation, to all citizens.

That it has been exposed to many dangers, that it has met critical moments, is certain. That it is now exposed to dangers, and that a crisis is now before it, is equally clear, in my judgment. But it has hitherto been preserved, and vigilance and patriotism may rescue it again.

Our dangers, Gentlemen, are not from *without*. We have nothing to fear from foreign powers, except those interruptions of the occupations of life which all wars occasion. The dangers to our system, as a system, do not spring from that quarter. On the contrary, the pressure of foreign hostility would be most likely to unite us, and to strengthen our union, by an augmented sense of its utility and necessity. But our dangers are from within. I do not now speak of those dangers which have in all ages beset republican governments, such as luxury among the rich, the corruption of public officers, and the general degradation of public morals. I speak only of those peculiar dangers to which the structure of our government particularly exposes it, in addition to all other ordinary dangers. These arise among ourselves; they spring up at home; and the evil which they threaten is no less than disunion, or the overthrow of the whole system. Local feelings and local parties, a notion sometimes sedulously cultivated of opposite interests in different portions of the Union, evil prophecies respecting its duration, cool calculations upon the benefits of separation, a narrow feeling that cannot embrace all the States as one country, an unsocial, anti-national, and half-belligerent spirit, which sometimes betrays itself,—all these undoubtedly are causes which affect, more or less, our prospect of holding together. All these are unpropitious influences.

The Constitution, again, is founded on compromise, and the most perfect and absolute good faith, in regard to every stipulation of this kind contained in it is indispensable to its preservation. Every attempt to accomplish even the best purpose, every attempt to grasp that which is regarded as an immediate good, in violation of these stipulations, is full of danger to the whole Constitution. I need not say, also, that possible collision between the general and the State governments always has been, is, and ever must be, a source of danger to be strictly watched by wise men.

But, Gentlemen, as I have spoken of dangers now, in my judgment actually existing, I will state at once my opinions on that point, without fear and without reserve. I reproach no man, I accuse no man; but I speak of things as they appear to me, and I speak of principles and practices which I deem most alarming. I think, then, Gentlemen, that a great practical change is going on in the Constitution, which, if not checked, must completely alter its whole character. This change consists in the diminution of the just powers of Congress on the one hand, and in the vast increase of executive authority on the other. The government of the United States, in the aggregate, or the legislative power of Congress, seems fast losing, one after another, its accustomed powers. One by one, they are practically struck out of the Constitution. What has become of the power of internal improvement? Does it remain in the Constitution, or is it erased by the repeated exercise of the President's veto, and the acquiescence in that exercise of all who call themselves his friends, whatever their own opinions of the Constitution may be? The power to create a national bank, a power exercised for forty years, approved by all Presidents, and by Congress at all times, and sanctioned by a solemn adjudication of the Supreme Court, is it not true that party has agreed to strike this power, too, from the Constitution, in compliance with what has been openly called the interests of party? Nay, more; that great power, the power of protecting domestic industry, who can tell me whether that power is now regarded as in the Constitution, or out of it?

But, if it be true that the diminution of the just powers of Congress, in these particulars, has been attempted, and attempted with more or less success, it is still more obvious, I think, that the executive power of the government has been danger-

ously increased. It is spread, in the first place, over all that ground from which the legislative power of Congress is driven. Congress can no longer establish a bank, controlled by the laws of the United States, amenable to the authority, and open, at all times, to the examination and inspection of the legislature. It is no longer constitutional to make such a bank, for the safe custody of the public treasure. But of the thousand State corporations already existing, it is constitutional for the executive government to select such as it pleases, to intrust the public money to their keeping, without responsibility to the laws of the United States, without the duty of exhibiting their concerns, at any time, to the committees of Congress, and with no other guards or securities than such as executive discretion on the one hand, and the banks themselves on the other, may see fit to agree to.

And so of internal improvement. It is not every thing in the nature of public improvements which is forbidden. It is only that the selection of objects is not with Congress. Whatever appears to the executive discretion to be of a proper nature, or such as comes within certain not very intelligible limits, may be tolerated. And even with respect to the tariff itself, while as a system it is denounced as unconstitutional, it is probable some portion of it might find favor.

But it is not the frequent use of the power of the veto, it is not the readiness with which men yield their own opinions, and see important powers practically obliterated from the Constitution, in order to subserve the interest of the party, it is not even all this which furnishes, at the present moment, the most striking demonstration of the increase of executive authority. It is the use of the power of patronage; it is the universal giving and taking away of all place and office, for reasons no way connected with the public service, or the faithful execution of the laws; it is this which threatens with overthrow all the true principles of the government. Patronage is reduced to a system. It is used as the patrimony, the property of party. Every office is a largess, a bounty, a favor; and it is expected to be compensated by service and fealty. A numerous and well-disciplined corps of office-holders, acting with activity and zeal, and with incredible union of purpose, is attempting to seize on the strong posts, and to control, effectually, the expression of the public will. As has been said of the Turks in Europe, they are not so

much mingled with us, as encamped among us. And it is more lamentable, that the apathy which prevails in a time of general prosperity produces, among a great majority of the people, a disregard to the efforts and objects of this well-trained and effective corps. But, Gentlemen, the principle is vicious; it is destructive and ruinous; and whether it produces its work of disunion to-day or to-morrow, it must produce it in the end. It must destroy the balance of the government, and so destroy the government itself. The government of the United States controls the army, the navy, the custom-house, the post-office, the land-offices, and other great sources of patronage. What have the States to oppose to all this? And if the States shall see all this patronage, if they shall see every officer under this government, in all its ramifications, united with every other officer, and all acting steadily in a design to produce political effect, even in State governments, is it possible not to perceive that they will, before long, regard the whole government of the Union with distrust and jealousy, and finally with fear and hatred?

Among other evils, it is the tendency of this system to push party feelings and party spirit to their utmost excess. It involves not only opinions and principles, but the pursuits of life and the means of living, in the contests of party. The executive himself becomes but the mere point of concentration of party power; and when executive power is exercised or is claimed for the supposed benefit of party, party will approve and justify it. When did heated and exasperated party ever complain of its leaders for seizing on new degrees of power?

This system of government has been openly avowed. Offices of trust are declared, from high places, to be the regular spoils of party victory; and all that is furnished out of the public purse, as a reward for labor in the public service, becomes thus a boon, offered to personal devotion and partisan service. The uncontrolled power of removal is the spring which moves all this machinery; and I verily believe the government is, and will be, in serious danger, till some check is placed on that power. To combine and consolidate a great party by the influence of personal hopes, to govern by the patronage of office, to exercise the power of removal at pleasure, in order to render that patronage effectual, — this seems to be the sum and substance of the political systems of the times. I am sorry to say, that the germ of this system had its first being in the Senate.

The policy began in the last year of Mr. Adams's administration, when nominations made by him to fill vacancies occurring by death or resignation were postponed, by a vote of the majority of the Senate, to a period beyond the ensuing 4th of March; and this was done with no other view than that of giving the patronage of these appointments to the incoming President. The nomination of a judge of the Supreme Court, among others, was thus disposed of. The regular action of the government was, in this manner, deranged, and undue and unjustly obtained patronage came to be received as among the ordinary means of government. Some of the gentlemen who concurred in this vote have since, probably, seen occasion to regret it. But they thereby let loose the lion of executive prerogative, and they have not yet found out how they can drive it back again to its cage. The debates in the Senate on these questions, in the session of 1828-29, are not public; but I take this occasion to say, that the minority of the Senate, as it was then constituted, including, among others, myself and colleague, contended against this innovation upon the Constitution, for days and for weeks; but we contended in vain.

The doctrine of patronage thus got a foothold in the government. A general removal from office followed, exciting, at first, no small share of public attention; but every exercise of the power rendered its exercise in the next case still easier, till removal at will has become the actual system on which the government is administered.

It is hardly a fit occasion, Gentlemen, to go into the history of this power of removal. It was declared to exist in the days of Washington, by a very small majority in each house of Congress. It has been considered as existing to the present time. But no man expected it to be used as a mere arbitrary power; and those who maintained its existence declared, nevertheless, that it would justly become matter of impeachment, if it should be used for purposes such as those to which the most blind among us must admit they have recently seen it habitually applied. I have the highest respect for those who originally concurred in this construction of the Constitution. But, as discreet men of the day were divided on the question, as Madison and other distinguished names were on one side, and Gerry and other distinguished names on the other, one may now differ from either, without incurring the imputation of arrogance, since

he must differ from some of them. I confess my judgment would have been, that the power of removal did not belong to the President alone; that it was but a part of the power of appointment, since the power of appointing one man to office implies the power of vacating that office, by removing another out of it; and as the whole power of appointment is granted, not to the President alone, but to the President and Senate, the true interpretation of the Constitution would have carried the power of removal into the same hands. I have, however, so recently expressed my sentiments on this point in another place, that it would be improper to pursue this line of observation further.

In the course of the last session, Gentlemen, several bills passed the Senate, intended to correct abuses, to restrain useless expenditure, to curtail the discretionary authority of public officers, and to control government patronage. The post-office bill, the custom-house bill, and the bill respecting the tenure of office, were all of this class. None of them, however, received the favorable consideration of the other house. I believe, that in all these respects a reform, a real, honest reform, is decidedly necessary to the security of the Constitution; and while I continue in public life, I shall not halt in my endeavors to produce it. It is time to bring back the government to its true character as an agency for the people. It is time to declare that offices, created for the people, are public trusts, not private spoils. It is time to bring each and every department within its true original limits. It is time to assent, on one hand, to the just powers of Congress, in their full extent, and to resist, on the other, the progress and rapid growth of executive authority.

These, Gentlemen, are my opinions. I have spoken them frankly, and without reserve. Under present circumstances, I should wish to avoid any concealment, and to state my political opinions in their full length and breadth. I desire not to stand before the country as a man of no opinions, or of such a mixture of opposite opinions that the result has no character at all. On the contrary, I am desirous of standing as one who is bound to his own consistency by the frankest avowal of his sentiments, on all important and interesting subjects. I am not partly for the Constitution, and partly against it; I am wholly for it, for it altogether, for it as it is, and for the exercise, when occasion requires, of all its just powers, as they have heretofore been ex-

exercised by Washington, and the great men who have followed him in its administration.

I disdain, altogether, the character of an uncommitted man. I am committed, fully committed; committed to the full extent of all that I am, and all that I hope, to the Constitution of the country, to its love and reverence, to its defence and maintenance, to its warm commendation to every American heart, and to its vindication and just praise, before all mankind. And I am committed *against* every thing which, in my judgment, may weaken, endanger, or destroy it. I am committed against the encouragement of local parties and local feelings; I am committed against all fostering of anti-national spirit; I am committed against the slightest infringement of the original compromise on which the Constitution was founded; I am committed against any and every derangement of the powers of the several departments of the government, against any derogation from the constitutional authority of Congress, and especially against all extension of executive power; and I am committed against any attempt to rule the free people of this country by the power and the patronage of the government itself. I am committed, fully and entirely committed, against making the government the people's master.

These, Gentlemen, are my opinions. I have purposely avowed them with the utmost frankness. They are not the sentiments of the moment, but the result of much reflection, and of some experience in the affairs of the country. I believe them to be such sentiments as are alone compatible with the permanent prosperity of the country, or the long continuance of its union.

And now, Gentlemen, having thus solemnly avowed these sentiments and these convictions, if you should find me hereafter to be false to them, or to falter in their support, I now conjure you, by all the duty you owe your country, by all your hopes of her prosperity and renown, by all your love for the general cause of liberty throughout the world,—I conjure you, that, renouncing me as a recreant, you yourselves go on, right on, straightforward, in maintaining, with your utmost zeal and with all your power, the true principles of the best, the happiest, the most glorious Constitution of a free government, with which it has pleased Providence, in any age, to bless any of the nations of the earth.

Reception at New York

Introductory Note

At a meeting of the political friends of the Hon. Daniel Webster, held at Euterpian Hall, in the city of New York, on Tuesday evening, the 21st of February, 1837, Chancellor Kent was called to the chair, and Messrs. Hiram Ketchum and Gabriel P. Dissosway were appointed secretaries.

The object of the meeting having been explained, the following resolutions were, on motion, duly seconded and unanimously adopted : —

“ *Resolved*, That this meeting has heard with deep concern of the intention of the Hon. Daniel Webster to resign his seat in the Senate of the United States at the close of the present session of Congress, or early in the next session.

“ *Resolved*, That while we regret the resignation of Mr. Webster, it would be most unreasonable to censure the exercise of his right to seek repose, after fourteen years of unremitted, zealous, and highly distinguished labors in the Congress of the United States ; but we indulge the hope that the nation will, at no distant day, again profit by his ripe experience as a statesman and his extensive knowledge of public affairs, by his wisdom in council and eloquence in debate.

“ *Resolved*, That in the judgment of this meeting there is none among the living or the dead who has given to the country more just or able explications of the Constitution of the United States ; none who has enforced, with more lucid and impassionate eloquence, the necessity and importance of the preservation of the Union, or exhibited more zeal or ability in defending the Constitution from the foes without the government, and foes within it, than Daniel Webster.

“ *Resolved*, That there is no part of our widely extended country more deeply interested in the preservation of the Union than the city of New York ; her motto should be ‘ Union and Liberty, now and for ever, one and inseparable,’ and her gratitude should be shown to the statesman who first gave utterance to this sentiment.

“ *Resolved*, That David B. Ogden, Peter Stagg, Jonathan Thompson, James Brown, Philip Hone, Samuel Stevens, Robert Smith, Joseph Tucker, Peter Sharpe, Egbert Benson, Hugh Maxwell, Peter A. Jay, Aaron Clark, Ira B. Wheeler, William W. Todd, Seth Grosvenor, Sim-eon Draper, Jr., Wm. Aspinwall, Nathaniel Weed, Jonathan Goodhue, Caleb Bartow, Hiram Ketchum, Gabriel P. Dissosway, Henry K. Bogert, James Kent, Wm. S. Johnson, and John W. Leavitt, Esqrs., be a committee authorized and empowered to receive the Hon. Daniel Webster

on his return from Washington, and make known to him, in the form of an address or otherwise, the sentiments which this meeting, in common with the friends of the Union and the Constitution in the city, entertain for the services which he has performed for the country ; that the committee correspond with Mr. Webster, and ascertain the time when his arrival may be expected, and give public notice of the same, together with the order of proceedings which may be adopted under these resolutions.

“ *Resolved*, That these resolutions, signed by the Chairman and Secretaries, be published when the committee shall notify the public of the expected arrival of Mr. Webster.

“ JAMES KENT, *Chairman*.

“ HIRAM KETCHUM,
GABRIEL P. DISSOSWAY, } *Secretaries*.”

“ *New York, March 1, 1837.*

“ SIR : — I having been currently reported that you have signified your intention to resign your seat in the Senate of the United States, a number of the friends of the Union and the Constitution in this city were convened on the evening of the 21st of last month, to devise measures whereby they might signify to you the sentiments which they, in common with all the Whigs in this city, entertain for the eminent services you have rendered to the country. At this meeting, the Hon. James Kent was called to the chair, and resolutions, a copy of which I inclose you, were adopted, not only with entire unanimity, but with a feeling of warm and hearty concurrence. On behalf of the committee appointed under one of these resolutions, I now have the honor to address you. It will be gratifying to the committee to learn from you at what time you expect to arrive in this city on your return to Massachusetts. If informed of the time of your arrival, it will afford the committee pleasure to meet you, and, in behalf of the Whigs of New York, to welcome you, and to offer you, in a more extended form than the resolutions present, their views of your public services. I am instructed by the committee to say, that, whether you shall choose to appear among us as a public man or a private citizen, you will be warmly greeted by every sound friend of that Constitution for which you have been so distinguished a champion. Should your resolution to resign your seat in the Senate be relinquished, you will, in the opinion of the committee, impose new obligations upon the friends of the Union and the Constitution.

“ I have the honor to be, very truly, your obedient servant,

“ D. B. OGDEN.

“ Hon. DANIEL WEBSTER, Washington.”

“ *Washington, March 4th, 1837.*

“ MY DEAR SIR : — I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant, communicating the resolutions adopted at a meeting of a number of political friends in New York.

“ The character of these resolutions, and the kindness of the sentiments expressed in your letter, have filled me with unaffected gratitude. I feel, at the same time, how little deserving are any political servi-

James Kent

From the Painting by Rembrandt Peale, in the possession of
the family, at Tuxedo Park, Tuxedo, N. Y.



ces of mine of such commendation from such a source. To the discharge of the duties of my public situation, sometimes both anxious and difficult, I have devoted time and labor without reserve ; and have made sacrifices of personal and private convenience not always unimportant. These, together with integrity of purpose and fidelity, constitute, I am conscious, my only claim to the public regard ; and for all these I find myself richly compensated by proofs of approbation such as your communication affords.

" My desire to relinquish my seat in the Senate for the two years still remaining of the term for which I was chosen, would have been carried into execution at the close of the present session of the Senate, had not circumstances existed which, in the judgment of others, rendered it expedient to defer the fulfilment of that purpose for the present.

" It is my expectation to be in New York early in the week after next ; and it will give me pleasure to meet the political friends who have tendered me this kind and respectful attention, in any manner most agreeable to them.

" I pray you to accept for yourself, and the other gentlemen of the committee, my highest regard.

" DANIEL WEBSTER.

" To D. B. OGDEN, Esq., New York."

" At a meeting of the committee appointed under the above resolution, Philip Hone, Robert Smith, John W. Leavitt, Egbert Benson, Ira B. Wheeler, Caleb Bartow, Simeon Draper, Jr., and Wm. S. Johnson, Esqrs., were appointed a sub-committee to make arrangements for the reception of Mr. Webster. The committee have corresponded with Mr. Webster, and ascertained that he will leave Philadelphia on the morning of Wednesday next. He will be met by the committee, and, on landing at Whitehall, at about two o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, will thence be conducted by the committee, accompanied by such other citizens as choose to join them, to a place hereafter to be designated. In the evening, at half past six o'clock, he will be addressed by the committee, in a public meeting of citizens, at Niblo's Saloon.

" D. B. OGDEN, *Chairman*.

On the subsequent day, March 15th, the committee appointed for that purpose met Mr. Webster at Amboy, and accompanied him to the city, where he was met, on landing, by a very numerous assemblage of citizens, who thronged to see the distinguished Senator, and give him a warm welcome ; after landing, he was attended by the committee and a numerous cavalcade through Broadway, which was crowded with the most respectable citizens, to lodgings provided for him at the American Hotel. Here he made a short address to the assembled citizens, and in the evening was accompanied by the committee to Niblo's Saloon. One of the largest meetings ever held in the city of New York assembled in the Saloon, and at half past six o'clock was called to order by AARON CLARK ; DAVID B. OGDEN was called to the chair as President of the meeting ;

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Robert C. Cornell, Jonathan Goodhue, Joseph Tucker, and Nathaniel Weed were nominated Vice-Presidents ; and Joseph Hoxie and George S. Robbins, Secretaries.

After the meeting was organized, PHILIP HONE introduced Mr. Webster with a few appropriate remarks, and he was received with the most enthusiastic greetings. Mr. OGDEN then addressed him as follows : —

“ On behalf of a committee, appointed at a meeting of a number of your personal and political friends in this city, I have now the honor of addressing you.

“ It has afforded the committee, and, I may add, all your political friends, unmingled pleasure to learn that you have, at least for the present, relinquished the intention which I know you had formed of resigning your seat in the Senate of the United States. While expressing their feelings upon this change in your determination, the committee cannot avoid congratulating the country that your public services are not yet to be lost to it, and that the great champion of the Constitution and of the Union is still to continue in the field upon which he has earned so many laurels, and has so nobly asserted and defended the rights and liberties of the people.

“ The effort made by you, and the honorable men with whom you have acted in the Senate, to resist executive encroachments upon the other departments of the government, will ever be remembered with gratitude by the friends of American liberty. That these efforts were not more successful, we shall long have reason to remember and regret. The administration of General Jackson is fortunately at an end. Its effects upon the Constitution and upon the commercial prosperity of the country are not at an end. Without attempting to review the leading measures of his administration, every man engaged in business in New York feels, most sensibly, that his experiment upon the currency has produced the evils which you foretold it would produce. It has brought distress, to an extent never before experienced, upon the men of enterprise and of small capital, and has put all the primary power in the hands of a few great capitalists.

“ Upon the Senate our eyes and our hopes are fixed ; we know that you and your political friends are in a minority in that body, but we know that in that minority are to be found great talents, great experience, great patriotism, and we look for great and continued exertions to maintain the Constitution, the Union, and the liberties of this people. And we take this opportunity of expressing our entire confidence, that whatever men can do in a minority will be done in the Senate to relieve the country from the evils under which she is now laboring, and to save her from being sacrificed by folly, corruption, or usurpation.

“ It gives me, Sir, pleasure to be the organ of the committee to express to you their great respect for your talents, their deep sense of the importance of your public services, and their gratification to learn that you will still continue in the Senate.”

To this address Mr. WEBSTER replied in the following speech.

Reception at New York*

MR. CHAIRMAN, AND FELLOW-CITIZENS: — It would be idle in me to affect to be indifferent to the circumstances under which I have now the honor of addressing you.

I find myself in the commercial metropolis of the continent, in the midst of a vast assembly of intelligent men, drawn from all the classes, professions, and pursuits of life.

And you have been pleased, Gentlemen, to meet me, in this imposing manner, and to offer me a warm and cordial welcome to your city. I thank you. I feel the full force and importance of this manifestation of your regard. In the highly-flattering resolutions which invited me here, in the respectability of this vast multitude of my fellow-citizens, and in the approbation and hearty good-will which you have here manifested, I feel cause for profound and grateful acknowledgment.

To every individual of this meeting, therefore, I would now most respectfully make that acknowledgment; and with every one, as with hands joined in mutual greeting, I reciprocate friendly salutation, respect, and good wishes.

But, Gentlemen, although I am well assured of your personal regard, I cannot fail to know, that the times, the political and commercial condition of things which exists among us, and an intelligent spirit, awakened to new activity and a new degree of anxiety, have mainly contributed to fill these avenues and crowd these halls. At a moment of difficulty, and of much alarm, you come here as Whigs of New York, to meet one whom you believe to be bound to you by common principles and common sentiments, and pursuing, with you, a common object. Gentle-

* A Speech delivered at Niblo's Saloon, in New York, on the 15th of March, 1837.

men, I am proud to admit this community of our principles, and this identity of our objects. You are for the Constitution of the country; so am I. You are for the Union of the States; so am I. You are for equal laws, for the equal rights of all men, for constitutional and just restraints on power, for the substance and not the shadowy image only of popular institutions, for a government which has liberty for its spirit and soul, as well as in its forms; and so am I. You feel that if, in warm party times, the executive power is in hands distinguished for boldness, for great success, for perseverance, and other qualities which strike men's minds strongly, there is danger of derangement of the powers of government, danger of a new division of those powers, in which the executive is likely to obtain the lion's part; and danger of a state of things in which the more popular branches of the government, instead of being guards and sentinels against any encroachments from the executive, seek, rather, support from its patronage, safety against the complaints of the people in its ample and all-protecting favor, and refuge in its power; and so I feel, and so I have felt for eight long and anxious years.

You believe that a very efficient and powerful cause in the production of the evils which now fall on the industrious and commercial classes of the community, is the derangement of the currency, the destruction of the exchanges, and the unnatural and unnecessary *misplacement* of the specie of the country, by unauthorized and illegal treasury orders. So do I believe. I predicted all this from the beginning, and from before the beginning. I predicted it all, last spring, when that was attempted to be done by law which was afterwards done by executive authority; and from the moment of the exercise of that executive authority to the present time, I have both foreseen and seen the regular progress of things under it, from inconvenience and embarrassment, to pressure, loss of confidence, disorder, and bankruptcies.

Gentlemen, I mean, on this occasion, to speak my sentiments freely on the great topics of the day. I have nothing to conceal, and shall therefore conceal nothing. In regard to political sentiments, purposes, or objects, there is nothing in my heart which I am ashamed of; I shall throw it all open, therefore, to you, and to all men. [That is right, said some one in the crowd; let us have it, with no non-committal.] Yes,

my friend, without non-committal or evasion, without barren generalities or empty phrase, without *if* or *but*, without a single touch, in all I say, bearing the oracular character of an Inaugural, I shall, on this occasion, speak my mind plainly, freely, and independently, to men who are just as free to concur or not to concur in my sentiments, as I am to utter them. I think you are entitled to hear my opinions freely and frankly spoken; but I freely acknowledge that you are still more clearly entitled to retain, and maintain, your own opinions, however they may differ or agree with mine.

It is true, Gentlemen, that I have contemplated the relinquishment of my seat in the Senate for the residue of the term, now two years, for which I was chosen. This resolution was not taken from disgust or discouragement, although some things have certainly happened which might excite both those feelings. But in popular governments, men must not suffer themselves to be permanently disgusted by occasional exhibitions of political harlequinism, or deeply discouraged, although their efforts to awaken the people to what they deem the dangerous tendency of public measures be not crowned with immediate success. It was altogether from other causes, and other considerations, that, after an uninterrupted service of fourteen or fifteen years, I naturally desired a respite. But those whose opinions I am bound to respect saw objections to a present withdrawal from Congress; and I have yielded my own strong desire to their convictions of what the public good requires.

Gentlemen, in speaking here on the subjects which now so much interest the community, I wish in the outset to disclaim all personal disrespect towards individuals. He whose character and fortune have exercised such a decisive influence on our politics for eight years, has now retired from public station. I pursue him with no personal reflections, no reproaches. Between him and myself, there has always existed a respectful personal intercourse. Moments have existed, indeed, critical and decisive upon the general success of his administration, in which he has been pleased to regard my aid as not altogether unimportant. I now speak of him respectfully, as a distinguished soldier, as one who, in that character, has done the state much service; as a man, too, of strong and decided character, of unsubdued resolution and perseverance in whatever he undertakes. In speak-

ing of his civil administration, I speak without censoriousness, or harsh imputation of motives; I wish him health and happiness in his retirement; but I must still speak as I think of his public measures, and of their general bearing and tendency, not only on the present interests of the country, but also on the well-being and security of the government itself.

There are, however, some topics of a less urgent present application and importance, upon which I wish to say a few words, before I advert to those which are more immediately connected with the present distressed state of things.

My learned and highly-valued friend (Mr. Ogden) who has addressed me in your behalf, has been kindly pleased to speak of my political career as being marked by a freedom from local interests and prejudices, and a devotion to liberal and comprehensive views of public policy.

I will not say that this compliment is deserved. I will only say, that I have earnestly endeavored to deserve it. Gentlemen, the general government, to the extent of its power, is national. It is not consolidated, it does not embrace all powers of government. On the contrary, it is delegated, restrained, strictly limited.

But what powers it does possess, it possesses for the general, not for any partial or local good. It extends over a vast territory, embracing now six-and-twenty States, with interests various, but not irreconcilable, infinitely diversified, but capable of being all blended into political harmony.

He, however, who would produce this harmony must survey the whole field, as if all parts were as interesting to himself as they are to others, and with that generous, patriotic feeling, prompter and better than the mere dictates of cool reason, which leads him to embrace the whole with affectionate regard, as constituting, altogether, that object which he is so much bound to respect, to defend, and to love,—his country. We have around us, and more or less within the influence and protection of the general government, all the great interests of agriculture, navigation, commerce, manufactures, the fisheries, and the mechanic arts. The duties of the government, then, certainly extend over all this territory, and embrace all these vast interests. We have a maritime frontier, a sea-coast, of many thousand miles; and while no one doubts that it is

the duty of government to defend this coast by suitable military preparations, there are those who yet suppose that the powers of government stop at this point; and that as to works of peace and works of improvement, they are beyond our constitutional limits. I have ever thought otherwise. Congress has a right, no doubt, to declare war, and to provide armies and navies; and it has necessarily the right to build fortifications and batteries, to protect the coast from the effects of war. But Congress has authority also, and it is its duty, to regulate commerce, and it has the whole power of collecting duties on imports and tonnage. It must have ports and harbors, and dock-yards also, for its navies. Very early in the history of the government, it was decided by Congress, on the report of a highly respectable committee, that the transfer by the States to Congress of the power of collecting tonnage and other duties, and the grant of the authority to regulate commerce, charged Congress, necessarily, with the duty of maintaining such piers and wharves and light-houses, and of making such improvements, as might have been expected to be done by the States, if they had retained the usual means, by retaining the power of collecting duties on imports. The States, it was admitted, had parted with this power; and the duty of protecting and facilitating commerce by these means had passed, along with this power, into other hands. I have never hesitated, therefore, when the state of the treasury would admit, to vote for reasonable appropriations, for breakwaters, light-houses, piers, harbors, and similar public works, on any part of the whole Atlantic coast or the Gulf of Mexico, from Maine to Louisiana.

But how stands the inland frontier? How is it along the vast lakes and the mighty rivers of the North and West? Do our constitutional rights and duties terminate where the water ceases to be salt? or do they exist, in full vigor, on the shores of these inland seas? I never could doubt about this; and yet, Gentlemen, I remember even to have participated in a warm debate, in the Senate, some years ago, upon the constitutional right of Congress to make an appropriation for a pier in the harbor of Buffalo. What! make a harbor at Buffalo, where Nature never made any, and where therefore it was never intended any ever should be made! Take money from the people to run out piers from the sandy shores of Lake Erie, or

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deepen the channels of her shallow rivers! Where was the constitutional authority for this? Where would such strides of power stop? How long would the States have any power at all left, if their territory might be ruthlessly invaded for such unhallowed purposes, or how long would the people have any money in their pockets, if the government of the United States might tax them, at pleasure, for such extravagant projects as these? Piers, wharves, harbors, and breakwaters in the Lakes! These arguments, Gentlemen, however earnestly put forth heretofore, do not strike us with great power, at the present day, if we stand on the shores of Lake Erie, and see hundreds of vessels, with valuable cargoes and thousands of valuable lives, moving on its waters, with few shelters from the storm, except what is furnished by the havens created, or made useful, by the aid of government. These great lakes, stretching away many thousands of miles, not in a straight line, but with turns and deflections, as if designed to reach, by water communication, the greatest possible number of important points through a region of vast extent, cannot but arrest the attention of any one who looks upon the map. They lie connected, but variously placed; and interspersed, as if with studied variety of form and direction, over that part of the country. They were made for man, and admirably adapted for his use and convenience. Looking, Gentlemen, over our whole country, comprehending in our survey the Atlantic coast, with its thick population, its advanced agriculture, its extended commerce, its manufactures and mechanic arts, its varieties of communication, its wealth, and its general improvements; and looking, then, to the interior, to the immense tracts of fresh, fertile, and cheap lands, bounded by so many lakes, and watered by so many magnificent rivers, let me ask if such a MAP was ever before presented to the eye of any statesman, as the theatre for the exercise of his wisdom and patriotism? And let me ask, too, if any man is fit to act a part, on such a theatre, who does not comprehend the whole of it within the scope of his policy, and embrace it all as his country?

Again, Gentlemen, we are one in respect to the glorious Constitution under which we live. We are all united in the great brotherhood of American liberty. Descending from the same ancestors, bred in the same school, taught in infancy to imbibe

the same general political sentiments, Americans all, by birth, education, and principle, what but a narrow mind, or woful ignorance, or besotted selfishness, or prejudice ten times blinded, can lead any of us to regard the citizens of any part of the country as strangers and aliens?

The solemn truth, moreover, is before us, that a common political fate attends us all.

Under the present Constitution, wisely and conscientiously administered, all are safe, happy, and renowned. The measure of our country's fame may fill all our breasts. It is fame enough for us all to partake in *her* glory, if we will carry her character onward to its true destiny. But if the system is broken, its fragments must fall alike on all. Not only the cause of American liberty, but the grand cause of liberty throughout the whole earth, depends, in a great measure, on upholding the Constitution and Union of these States. If shattered and destroyed, no matter by what cause, the peculiar and cherished idea of United American Liberty will be no more for ever. There may be free states, it is possible, when there shall be separate states. There may be many loose, and feeble, and hostile confederacies, where there is now one great and united confederacy. But the noble idea of United American Liberty, of *our* liberty, such as our fathers established it, will be extinguished for ever. Fragments and shattered columns of the edifice may be found remaining; and melancholy and mournful ruins will they be. The august temple itself will be prostrate in the dust. Gentlemen, the citizens of this republic cannot sever their fortunes. A common fate awaits us. In the honor of upholding, or in the disgrace of undermining the Constitution, we shall all necessarily partake. Let us then stand by the Constitution as it is, and by our country as it is, one, united, and entire; let it be a truth engraven on our hearts, let it be borne on the flag under which we rally, in every exigency, that we have ONE COUNTRY, ONE CONSTITUTION, ONE DESTINY.

Gentlemen, of our interior administration, the public lands constitute a highly important part. This is a subject of great interest, and it ought to attract much more attention than it has hitherto received, especially from the people of the Atlantic States. The public lands are public property. They belong to

the people of all the States. A vast portion of them is composed of territories which were ceded by individual States to the United States, after the close of the Revolutionary war, and before the adoption of the present Constitution. The history of these cessions, and the reasons for making them, are familiar to you. Some of the Old Thirteen possessed large tracts of unsettled lands within their chartered limits. The Revolution had established their title to these lands, and as the Revolution had been brought about by the common treasure and the common blood of all the Colonies, it was thought not unreasonable that these unsettled lands should be transferred to the United States, to pay the debt created by the war, and afterwards to remain as a fund for the use of all the States. This is the well-known origin of the title possessed by the United States to lands northwest of the River Ohio.

By treaties with France and Spain, Louisiana and Florida, containing many millions of acres of public land, have been since acquired. The cost of these acquisitions was paid, of course, by the general government, and was thus a charge upon the whole people. The public lands, therefore, all and singular, are national property; granted to the United States, purchased by the United States, paid for by all the people of the United States.

The idea, that, when a new State is created, the public lands lying within her territory become the property of such new State in consequence of her sovereignty, is too preposterous for serious refutation. Such notions have heretofore been advanced in Congress, but nobody has sustained them. They were rejected and abandoned, although one cannot say whether they may not be revived, in consequence of recent propositions which have been made in the Senate. The new States are admitted on express conditions, recognizing, to the fullest extent, the right of the United States to the public lands within their borders; and it is no more reasonable to contend that some indefinite idea of State sovereignty overrides all these stipulations, and makes the lands the property of the States, against the provisions and conditions of their own constitution, and the Constitution of the United States, than it would be, that a similar doctrine entitled the State of New York to the money collected at the custom-house in this city; since it is no more inconsistent with sov-

ereignty that one government should hold lands, for the purpose of sale, within the territory of another, than it is that it should lay and collect taxes and duties within such territory. Whatever extravagant pretensions may have been set up heretofore, there was not, I suppose, an enlightened man in the whole West, who insisted on any such right in the States, when the proposition to cede the lands to the States was made, in the late session of Congress. The public lands being, therefore the common property of all the people of all the States, I shall never consent to give them away to particular States, or to dispose of them otherwise than for the general good, and the general use of the whole country.

I felt bound, therefore, on the occasion just alluded to, to resist at the threshold a proposition to cede the public lands to the States in which they lie, on certain conditions. I very much regretted the introduction of such a measure, as its effect must be, I fear, only to agitate what was well settled, and to disturb that course of proceeding in regard to the public lands, which forty years of experience have shown to be so wise, and so satisfactory in its operation, both to the people of the old States and to those of the new.

But, Gentlemen, although the public lands are not to be given away, nor ceded to particular States, a very liberal policy in regard to them ought certainly to prevail. Such a policy has prevailed, and I have steadily supported it, and shall continue to support it so long as I may remain in public life. The main object, in regard to these lands, is undoubtedly to settle them, so fast as the growth of our population, and its augmentation by emigration, may enable us to settle them.

The lands, therefore, should be sold, at a low price; and, for one, I have never doubted the right or expediency of granting portions of the lands themselves, or of making grants of money, for objects of internal improvement, connected with them.

I have always supported liberal appropriations for the purpose of opening communications to and through these lands, by common roads, canals, and railroads; and where lands of little value have been long in market, and, on account of their indifferent quality are not likely to command a common price, I know no objection to a reduction of price, as to such lands, so that they may pass into private ownership. Nor do I feel any objections

to removing those restraints which prevent the States from taxing the lands for five years after they are sold. But while, in these and all other respects, I am not only reconciled to a liberal policy, but espouse it and support it, and have constantly done so, I still hold the national domain to be the general property of the country, confided to the care of Congress, and which Congress is solemnly bound to protect and preserve for the common good.

The benefit derived from the public lands, after all, is, and must be, in the greatest degree, enjoyed by those who buy them and settle upon them. The original price paid to government constitutes but a small part of their actual value. Their immediate rise in value, in the hands of the settler, gives him competence. He exercises a power of selection over a vast region of fertile territory, all on sale at the same price, and that price an exceedingly low one. Selection is no sooner made, cultivation is no sooner begun, and the first furrow turned, than he already finds himself a man of property. These are the advantages of Western emigrants and Western settlers; and they are such, certainly, as no country on earth ever before afforded to her citizens. This opportunity of purchase and settlement, this certainty of enhanced value, these sure means of immediate competence and ultimate wealth, — all these are the rights and the blessings of the people of the West, and they have my hearty wishes for their full and perfect enjoyment.

I desire to see the public lands cultivated and occupied. I desire the growth and prosperity of the West, and the fullest development of its vast and extraordinary resources. I wish to bring it near to us, by every species of useful communication. I see, not without admiration and amazement, but yet without envy or jealousy, States of recent origin already containing more people than Massachusetts. These people I know to be part of ourselves; they have proceeded from the midst of us, and we may trust that they are not likely to separate themselves, in interest or in feeling, from their kindred, whom they have left on the farms and around the hearths of their common fathers.

A liberal policy, a sympathy with its interests, an enlightened and generous feeling of participation in its prosperity, are due to the West, and will be met, I doubt not, by a return of sentiments equally cordial and equally patriotic.

Gentlemen, the general question of revenue is very much connected with this subject of the public lands, and I will therefore, in a very few words, express my views on that point.

The revenue involves not only the supply of the treasury with money, but the question of protection to manufactures. On these connected subjects, therefore, Gentlemen, as I have promised to keep nothing back, I will state my opinions plainly, but very shortly.

I am in favor of such a revenue as shall be equal to all the just and reasonable wants of the government; and I am decidedly opposed to all collection or accumulation of revenue beyond this point. An extravagant government expenditure, and unnecessary accumulation in the treasury, are both, of all things, to be most studiously avoided.

I am in favor of protecting American industry and labor, not only as employed in large manufactories, but also, and more especially, as employed in the various mechanic arts, carried on by persons of small capitals, and living by the earnings of their own personal industry. Every city in the Union, and none more than this, would feel severely the consequences of departing from the ancient and continued policy of the government respecting this last branch of protection. If duties were to be abolished on hats, boots, shoes, and other articles of leather, and on the articles fabricated of brass, tin, and iron, and on ready-made clothes, carriages, furniture, and many similar articles, thousands of persons would be immediately thrown out of employment in this city, and in other parts of the Union. Protection, in this respect, of our own labor against the cheaper, ill-paid, half-fed, and pauper labor of Europe, is, in my opinion, a duty which the country owes to its own citizens. I am, therefore, decidedly, for protecting our own industry and our own labor.

In the next place, Gentlemen, I am of opinion, that, with no more than usual skill in the application of the well-tried principles of discriminating and specific duties, all the branches of national industry may be protected, without imposing such duties on imports as shall overcharge the treasury.

And as to the revenues arising from the sales of the public lands, I am of opinion that they ought to be set apart for the use of the States. The States need the money. The government of the United States does not need it. Many of the States

have contracted large debts for objects of internal improvement; and others of them have important objects which they would wish to accomplish. The lands were originally granted for the use of the several States; and now that their proceeds are not necessary for the purposes of the general government, I am of opinion that they should go to the States, and to the people of the States, upon an equal principle. Set apart, then, the proceeds of the public lands for the use of the States; supply the treasury from duties on imports; apply to these duties a just and careful discrimination, in favor of articles produced at home by our own labor, and thus support, to a fair extent, our own manufactures. These, Gentlemen, appear to me to be the general outlines of that policy which the present condition of the country requires us to adopt.

Gentlemen, proposing to express opinions on the principal subjects of interest at the present moment, it is impossible to overlook the delicate question which has arisen from events which have happened in the late Mexican province of Texas. The independence of that province has now been recognized by the government of the United States. Congress gave the President the means, to be used when he saw fit, of opening a diplomatic intercourse with its government, and the late President immediately made use of those means.

I saw no objection, under the circumstances, to voting an appropriation to be used when the President should think the proper time had come; and he deemed, very promptly, it is true, that the time had already arrived. Certainly, Gentlemen, the history of Texas is not a little wonderful. A very few people, in a very short time, have established a government for themselves, against the authority of the parent state; and this government, it is generally supposed, there is little probability, at the present moment, of the parent state being able to overturn.

This government is, in form, a copy of our own. It is an American constitution, substantially after the great American model. We all, therefore, must wish it success; and there is no one who will more heartily rejoice than I shall, to see an independent community, intelligent, industrious, and friendly towards us, springing up, and rising into happiness, distinction, and power, upon our own principles of liberty and government.

But it cannot be disguised, Gentlemen, that a desire, or an intention, is already manifested to annex Texas to the United States. On a subject of such mighty magnitude as this, and at a moment when the public attention is drawn to it, I should feel myself wanting in candor, if I did not express my opinion; since all must suppose that, on such a question, it is impossible that I should be without some opinion.

I say then, Gentlemen, in all frankness, that I see objections, I think insurmountable objections, to the annexation of Texas to the United States. When the Constitution was formed, it is not probable that either its framers or the people ever looked to the admission of any States into the Union, except such as then already existed, and such as should be formed out of territories then already belonging to the United States. Fifteen years after the adoption of the Constitution, however, the case of Louisiana arose. Louisiana was obtained by treaty with France, who had recently obtained it from Spain; but the object of this acquisition, certainly, was not mere extension of territory. Other great political interests were connected with it. Spain, while she possessed Louisiana, had held the mouths of the great rivers which rise in the Western States, and flow into the Gulf of Mexico. She had disputed our use of these rivers already, and with a powerful nation in possession of these outlets to the sea, it is obvious that the commerce of all the West was in danger of perpetual vexation. The command of these rivers to the sea was, therefore, the great object aimed at in the acquisition of Louisiana. But that acquisition necessarily brought territory along with it, and three States now exist, formed out of that ancient province.

A similar policy, and a similar necessity, though perhaps not entirely so urgent, led to the acquisition of Florida.

Now, no such necessity, no such policy, requires the annexation of Texas. The accession of Texas to our territory is not necessary to the full and complete enjoyment of all which we already possess. Her case, therefore, stands upon a footing entirely different from that of Louisiana and Florida. There being no necessity for extending the limits of the Union in that direction, we ought, I think, for numerous and powerful reasons, to be content with our present boundaries.

Gentlemen, we all see that, by whomsoever possessed, Texas

is likely to be a slave-holding country; and I frankly avow my entire unwillingness to do any thing that shall extend the slavery of the African race on this continent, or add other slave-holding States to the Union. When I say that I regard slavery in itself as a great moral, social, and political evil, I only use language which has been adopted by distinguished men, themselves citizens of slave-holding States. I shall do nothing, therefore, to favor or encourage its further extension. We have slavery already amongst us. The Constitution found it in the Union; it recognized it, and gave it solemn guaranties. To the full extent of these guaranties we are all bound, in honor, in justice, and by the Constitution. All the stipulations contained in the Constitution in favor of the slave-holding States which are already in the Union ought to be fulfilled, and, so far as depends on me, shall be fulfilled, in the fulness of their spirit and to the exactness of their letter. Slavery, as it exists in the States, is beyond the reach of Congress. It is a concern of the States themselves; they have never submitted it to Congress, and Congress has no rightful power over it. I shall concur, therefore, in no act, no measure, no menace, no indication of purpose, which shall interfere or threaten to interfere with the exclusive authority of the several States over the subject of slavery as it exists within their respective limits. All this appears to me to be matter of plain and imperative duty.

But when we come to speak of admitting new States, the subject assumes an entirely different aspect. Our rights and our duties are then both different.

The free States, and all the States, are then at liberty to accept or to reject. When it is proposed to bring new members into this political partnership, the old members have a right to say on what terms such new partners are to come in, and what they are to bring along with them. In my opinion, the people of the United States will not consent to bring into the Union a new, vastly extensive, and slave-holding country, large enough for half a dozen or a dozen States. In my opinion, they ought not to consent to it. Indeed, I am altogether at a loss to conceive what possible benefit any part of this country can expect to derive from such annexation. Any benefit to any part is at least doubtful and uncertain; the objections are obvious, plain, and strong. On the general question of slavery, a great portion of

the community is already strongly excited. The subject has not only attracted attention as a question of politics, but it has struck a far deeper-toned chord. It has arrested the religious feeling of the country; it has taken strong hold on the consciences of men. He is a rash man, indeed, and little conversant with human nature, and especially has he a very erroneous estimate of the character of the people of this country, who supposes that a feeling of this kind is to be trifled with or despised. It will assuredly cause itself to be respected. It may be reasoned with, it may be made willing I believe it is entirely willing, to fulfil all existing engagements and all existing duties, to uphold and defend the Constitution as it is established, with whatever regrets about some provisions which it does actually contain. But to coerce it into silence, to endeavor to restrain its free expression, to seek to compress and confine it, warm as it is, and more heated as such endeavors would inevitably render it,—should this be attempted, I know nothing, even in the Constitution or in the Union itself, which would not be endangered by the explosion which might follow.

I see, therefore, no political necessity for the annexation of Texas to the Union; no advantages to be derived from it; and objections to it of a strong, and, in my judgment, decisive character.

I believe it to be for the interest and happiness of the whole Union to remain as it is, without diminution and without addition.

Gentleman, I pass to other subjects. The rapid advancement of the executive authority is a topic which has already been alluded to.

I believe there is serious cause of alarm from this source. I believe the power of the executive has increased, is increasing, and ought now to be brought back within its ancient constitutional limits. I have nothing to do with the motives which have led to those acts, which I believe to have transcended the boundaries of the Constitution. Good motives may always be assumed, as bad motives may always be imputed. Good intentions will always be pleaded for every assumption of power; but they cannot justify it, even if we were sure that they existed. It is hardly too strong to say, that the Constitution was made

to guard the people against the dangers of good intention, real or pretended. When bad intentions are boldly avowed, the people will promptly take care of themselves. On the other hand, they will always be asked why they should resist or question that exercise of power which is so fair in its object, so plausible and patriotic in appearance, and which has the public good alone confessedly in view? Human beings, we may be assured, will generally exercise power when they can get it; and they will exercise it most undoubtedly, in popular governments, under pretences of public safety or high public interest. It may be very possible that good intentions do really sometimes exist when constitutional restraints are disregarded. There are men, in all ages, who mean to exercise power usefully; but who mean to exercise it. They mean to govern well; but they mean to govern. They promise to be kind masters; but they mean to be masters. They think there need be but little restraint upon themselves. Their notion of the public interest is apt to be quite closely connected with their own exercise of authority. They may not, indeed, always understand their own motives. The love of power may sink too deep in their own hearts even for their own scrutiny, and may pass with themselves for mere patriotism and benevolence.

A character has been drawn of a very eminent citizen of Massachusetts, of the last age, which, though I think it does not entirely belong to him, yet very well describes a certain class of public men. It was said of this distinguished son of Massachusetts, that in matters of politics and government he cherished the most kind and benevolent feelings towards the whole earth. He earnestly desired to see all nations well governed; and to bring about this happy result, he wished that the United States might govern the rest of the world; that Massachusetts might govern the United States; that Boston might govern Massachusetts; and as for himself, his own humble ambition would be satisfied by governing the little town of Boston.

I do not intend, Gentlemen, to commit so unreasonable a trespass on your patience as to discuss all those cases in which I think executive power has been unreasonably extended. I shall only allude to some of them, and, as being earliest in the order of time, and hardly second to any other in importance, I men-

tion the practice of removal from all offices, high and low, for opinion's sake, and on the avowed ground of giving patronage to the President; that is to say, of giving him the power of influencing men's political opinions and political conduct, by hopes and by fears addressed directly to their pecuniary interests. The great battle on this point was fought, and was lost, in the Senate of the United States, in the last session of Congress under Mr. Adams's administration. After General Jackson was known to be elected, and before his term of office began, many important offices became vacant, by the usual causes of death and resignation. Mr. Adams, of course, nominated persons to fill these vacant offices. But a majority of the Senate was composed of the friends of General Jackson; and, instead of acting on these nominations, and filling the vacant offices with ordinary promptitude, the nominations were postponed to a day beyond the 4th of March, for the purpose, openly avowed, of giving the patronage of the appointments to the President who was then coming into office. When the new President entered on his office, he withdrew these nominations, and sent in nominations of his own friends in their places. I was of opinion then, and am of opinion now, that that decision of the Senate went far to unfix the proper balance of the government. It conferred on the President the power of rewards for party purposes, or personal purposes, without limit or control. It sanctioned, manifestly and plainly, that exercise of power which Mr. Madison had said would deserve impeachment; and it completely defeated one great object, which we are told the framers of the Constitution contemplated, in the manner of forming the Senate; that is, that the Senate might be a body not changing with the election of a President, and therefore likely to be able to hold over him some check or restraint in regard to bringing his own friends and partisans into power with him, and thus rewarding their services to him at the public expense.

The debates in the Senate, on these questions, were long continued and earnest. They were of course in secret session, but the opinions of those members who opposed this course have all been proved true by the result. The contest was severe and ardent, as much so as any that I have ever partaken in; and I have seen some service in that sort of warfare.

Gentlemen, when I look back to that eventful moment, when I remember who those were who upheld this claim for executive power, with so much zeal and devotion, as well as with such great and splendid abilities, and when I look round now, and inquire what has become of these gentlemen, where they have found themselves at last, under the power which they thus helped to establish, what has become now of all their respect, trust, confidence, and attachment, how many of them, indeed, have not escaped from being broken and crushed under the weight of the wheels of that engine which they themselves set in motion, I feel that an edifying lesson may be read by those who, in the freshness and fulness of party zeal, are ready to confer the most dangerous power, in the hope that they and their friends may bask in its sunshine, while enemies only shall be withered by its frown.

I will not go into the mention of names. I will give no enumeration of persons; but I ask you to turn your minds back, and recollect who the distinguished men were who supported, in the Senate, General Jackson's administration for the first two years; and I will ask you what you suppose they think now of that power and that discretion which they so freely confided to executive hands. What do they think of the whole career of that administration, the commencement of which, and indeed the existence of which, owed so much to their own great exertions?

In addition to the establishment of this power of unlimited and causeless removal, another doctrine has been put forth, more vague, it is true, but altogether unconstitutional, and tending to like dangerous results. In some loose, indefinite, and unknown sense, the President has been called the *representative of the whole American people*. He has called himself so repeatedly, and been so denominated by his friends a thousand times. Acts, for which no specific authority has been found either in the Constitution or the laws, have been justified on the ground that the President is the representative of the whole American people. Certainly, this is not constitutional language. Certainly, the Constitution nowhere calls the President the universal representative of the people. The constitutional representatives of the people are in the House of Representatives, exercis-

ing powers of legislation. The President is an executive officer, appointed in a particular manner, and clothed with prescribed and limited powers. It may be thought to be of no great consequence, that the President should call himself, or that others should call him, the sole representative of all the people, although he has no such appellation or character in the Constitution. But, in these matters, words are things. If he is the people's representative, and as such may exercise power, without any other grant, what is the limit to that power? And what may not an unlimited representative of the people do? When the Constitution expressly creates representatives, as members of Congress, it regulates, defines, and limits their authority. But if the executive chief magistrate, merely because he is the executive chief magistrate, may assume to himself another character, and call himself the representative of the whole people, what is to limit or restrain this representative power in his hands?

I fear, Gentlemen, that if these pretensions should be continued and justified, we might have many instances of summary political logic, such as I once heard in the House of Representatives. A gentleman, not now living, wished very much to vote for the establishment of a Bank of the United States, but he had always stoutly denied the constitutional power of Congress to create such a bank. The country, however, was in a state of great financial distress, from which such an institution, it was hoped, might help to extricate it; and this consideration led the worthy member to review his opinions with care and deliberation. Happily, on such careful and deliberate review, he altered his former judgment. He came, satisfactorily, to the conclusion that Congress might incorporate a bank. The argument which brought his mind to this result was short, and so plain and obvious, that he wondered how he should so long have overlooked it. The power, he said, to create a bank, was either given to Congress, or it was not given. Very well. If it was given, Congress of course could exercise it; if it was not given, the people still retained it, and in that case, Congress, as the representatives of the people, might, upon an emergency, make free to use it.

Arguments and conclusions in substance like these, Gentlemen, will not be wanting, if men of great popularity, commanding characters, sustained by powerful parties, *and full of good*

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intentions towards the public, may be permitted to call themselves the universal representatives of the people.

But, Gentlemen, it is the *currency*, the currency of the country,—it is this great subject, so interesting, so vital, to all classes of the community, which has been destined to feel the most violent assaults of executive power. The consequences are around us and upon us. Not unforeseen, not unforetold, here they come, bringing distress for the present, and fear and alarm for the future. If it be denied that the present condition of things has arisen from the President's interference with the revenue, the first answer is, that, when he did interfere, just such consequences were predicted. It was then said, and repeated, and pressed upon the public attention, that that interference must necessarily produce derangement, embarrassment, loss of confidence, and commercial distress. I pray you, Gentlemen, to recur to the debates of 1832, 1833, and 1834, and then to decide whose opinions have proved to be correct. When the treasury experiment was first announced, who supported, and who opposed it? Who warned the country against it? Who were they who endeavored to stay the violence of party, to arrest the hand of executive authority, and to convince the people that this experiment was delusive; that its object was merely to increase executive power, and that its effect, sooner or later, must be injurious and ruinous? Gentlemen, it is fair to bring the opinions of political men to the test of experience. It is just to judge of them by their measures, and their opposition to measures; and for myself, and those political friends with whom I have acted, on this subject of the currency, I am ready to abide the test.

But before the subject of the currency, and its present most embarrassing state, is discussed, I invite your attention, Gentlemen, to the history of executive proceedings connected with it. I propose to state to you a series of facts; not to argue upon them, not to *mystify* them, nor to draw any unjust inference from them; but merely to state the case, in the plainest manner, as I understand it. And I wish, Gentlemen, that, in order to be able to do this in the best and most convincing manner, I had the ability of my learned friend, (Mr. Ogden,) whom you have all so often heard, and who usually states his case in such a manner that, when stated, it is already very well argued.

Let us see, Gentlemen, what the train of occurrences has been in regard to our revenue and finances; and when these occurrences are stated, I leave to every man the right to decide for himself whether our present difficulties have or have not arisen from attempts to extend the executive authority. In giving this detail, I shall be compelled to speak of the late Bank of the United States; but I shall speak of it historically only. My opinion of its utility, and of the extraordinary ability and success with which its affairs were conducted for many years before the termination of its charter, is well known. I have often expressed it, and I have not altered it. But at present I speak of the bank only as it makes a necessary part in the history of events which I wish now to recapitulate.

Mr. Adams commenced his administration in March, 1825. He had been elected by the House of Representatives, and began his career as President under a powerful opposition. From the very first day, he was warmly, even violently, opposed in all his measures; and this opposition, as we all know, continued without abatement, either in force or asperity, through his whole term of four years. Gentlemen, I am not about to say whether this opposition was well or ill founded, just or unjust. I only state the fact as connected with other facts. The Bank of the United States, during these four years of Mr. Adams's administration, was in full operation. It was performing the fiscal duties enjoined on it by its charter; it had established numerous offices, was maintaining a large circulation, and transacting a vast business in exchange. Its character, conduct, and manner of administration were all well known to the whole country.

Now there are two or three things worthy of especial notice. One is, that during the whole of this heated political controversy, from 1825 to 1829, the party which was endeavoring to produce a change of administration in the general government brought no charge of political interference against the Bank of the United States. If any thing, it was rather a favorite with that party generally. Certainly, the party, as a party, did not ascribe to it undue attachment to other parties, or to the then existing administration. Another important fact is, that, during the whole of the same period, those who had espoused the cause of General Jackson, and who sought to bring about a revolution under his name, did not propose the destruction of the bank, or

its discontinuance, as one of the objects which were to be accomplished by the intended revolution. They did not tell the country that the bank was unconstitutional; they did not declare it unnecessary; they did not propose to get along without it, when they should come into power themselves. If individuals entertained any such purposes, they kept them much to themselves. The party, as a party, avowed none such. A third fact, worthy of all notice, is, that during this period there was no complaint about the state of the currency, either by the country generally or by the party then in opposition.

In March, 1829, General Jackson was inaugurated as President. He came into power on professions of reform. He announced reform of all abuses to be the great and leading object of his future administration; and in his inaugural address he pointed out the main subjects of this reform. But the bank was not one of them. It was not said by him that the bank was unconstitutional. It was not said that it was unnecessary or useless. It was not said that it had failed to do all that had been hoped or expected from it in regard to the currency.

In March, 1829, then, the bank stood well, very well, with the new administration. It was regarded, so far as appears, as entirely constitutional, free from political or party taint, and highly useful. It had as yet found no place in the catalogue of abuses to be reformed.

But, Gentlemen, nine months wrought a wonderful change. New lights broke forth before these months had rolled away; and the President, in his message to Congress in December, 1829, held a very unaccustomed language and manifested very unexpected purposes.

Although the bank had then five or six years of its charter unexpired, he yet called the attention of Congress very pointedly to the subject, and declared,—

1. That the constitutionality of the bank was well doubted by many;
2. That its utility or expediency was also well doubted;
3. That all must admit that it had failed to establish or maintain a sound and uniform currency; and
4. That the true bank for the use of the government of the United States would be a bank which should be founded on the revenues and credit of the government itself.

These propositions appeared to me, at the time, as very extraordinary, and the last one as very startling. A bank founded on the revenue and credit of the government, and managed and administered by the executive, was a conception which I had supposed no man holding the chief executive power in his own hands would venture to put forth.

But the question now is, what had wrought this great change of feeling and of purpose in regard to the bank. What events had occurred between March and December that should have caused the bank, so constitutional, so useful, so peaceful, and so safe an institution, in the first of these months, to start up into the character of a monster, and become so horrid and dangerous, in the last?

Gentlemen, let us see what the events were which had intervened. General Jackson was elected in December, 1828. His term was to begin in March, 1829. A session of Congress took place, therefore, between his election and the commencement of his administration.

Now, Gentlemen, the truth is, that during this session, and a little before the commencement of the new administration, a disposition was manifested by political men to interfere with the management of the bank. Members of Congress undertook to nominate or recommend individuals as directors in the branches, or offices, of the bank. They were kind enough, sometimes, to make out whole lists, or tickets, and to send them to Philadelphia, containing the names of those whose appointments would be satisfactory to General Jackson's friends. Portions of the correspondence on these subjects have been published in some of the voluminous reports and other documents connected with the bank, but perhaps have not been generally heeded or noticed. At first, the bank merely declined, as gently as possible, complying with these and similar requests. But like applications began to show themselves from many quarters, and a very marked case arose as early as June, 1829. Certain members of the Legislature of New Hampshire applied for a change in the presidency of the branch which was established in that State. A member of the Senate of the United States wrote both to the president of the bank and to the Secretary of the Treasury, strongly recommending a change, and in his letter to the Secretary hinting very distinctly at political con-

siderations as the ground of the movement. Other officers in the service of the government took an interest in the matter, and urged a change; and the Secretary himself wrote to the bank, suggesting and recommending it. The time had come, then, for the bank to take its position. It did take it; and, in my judgment, if it had not acted as it did act, not only would those who had the care of it have been most highly censurable, but a claim would have been yielded to, entirely inconsistent with a government of laws, and subversive of the very foundations of republicanism.

A long correspondence between the Secretary of the Treasury and the president of the bank ensued. The directors determined that they would not surrender either their rights or their duties to the control or supervision of the executive government. They said they had never appointed directors of their branches on political grounds, and they would not remove them on such grounds. They had avoided politics. They had sought for men of business, capacity, fidelity, and experience in the management of pecuniary concerns. They owed duties, they said, to the government, which they meant to perform, faithfully and impartially, under all administrations; and they owed duties to the stockholders of the bank, which required them to disregard political considerations in their appointments. This correspondence ran along into the fall of the year, and finally terminated in a stern and unanimous declaration, made by the directors, and transmitted to the Secretary of the Treasury, that the bank would continue to be independently administered, and that the directors once for all refused to submit to the supervision of the executive authority, in any of its branches, in the appointment of local directors and agents. This resolution decided the character of the future. Hostility towards the bank, thenceforward, became the settled policy of the government; and the message of December, 1829, was the clear announcement of that policy. If the bank had appointed those directors, thus recommended by members of Congress; if it had submitted all its appointments to the supervision of the treasury; if it had removed the president of the New Hampshire branch; if it had, in all things, showed itself a complying, political, party machine, instead of an independent institution; — if it had done this, I leave all men to judge whether such an entire change of opinion, as to its

constitutionality, its utility, and its good effects on the currency, would have happened between March and December.

From the moment in which the bank asserted its independence of treasury control, and its elevation above mere party purposes, down to the end of its charter, and down even to the present day, it has been the subject to which the selectest phrases of party denunciation have been plentifully applied.

But Congress manifested no disposition to establish a treasury bank. On the contrary, it was satisfied, and so was the country, most unquestionably, with the bank then existing. In the summer of 1832, Congress passed an act for continuing the charter of the bank, by strong majorities in both houses. In the House of Representatives, I think, two thirds of the members voted for the bill. The President gave it his negative; and as there were not two thirds of the Senate, though a large majority were for it, the bill failed to become a law.

But it was not enough that a continuance of the charter of the bank was thus refused. It had the deposit of the public money, and this it was entitled to by law, for the few years which yet remained of its chartered term. But this it was determined it should not continue to enjoy. At the commencement of the session of 1832-33, a grave and sober doubt was expressed by the Secretary of the Treasury, in his official communication, whether the public moneys were safe in the custody of the bank! I confess, Gentlemen, when I look back to this suggestion, thus officially made, so serious in its import, so unjust, if not well founded, and so greatly injurious to the credit of the bank, and injurious, indeed, to the credit of the whole country, I cannot but wonder that any man of intelligence and character should have been willing to make it. I read in it, however, the first lines of another chapter. I saw an attempt was now to be made to remove the deposits of the public money from the bank, and such an attempt was made that very session. But Congress was not to be prevailed upon to accomplish the end by its own authority. It was well ascertained that neither house would consent to it. The House of Representatives, indeed, at the heel of the session, decided against the proposition by a very large majority.

The legislative authority having been thus invoked, and invoked in vain, it was resolved to stretch farther the long arm of

executive power, and by that arm to reach and strike the victim. It so happened that I was in this city in May, 1833, and here learned, from a very authentic source, that the deposits would be removed by the President's order; and in June, as afterwards appeared, that order was given.

Now it is obvious, Gentlemen, that thus far the changes in our financial and fiscal system were effected, not by Congress, but by the executive; not by law, but by the will and the power of the President. Congress would have continued the charter of the bank; but the President negatived the bill. Congress was of opinion that the deposits ought not to be removed; but the President removed them. Nor was this all. The public moneys being withdrawn from the custody which the law had provided, by executive power alone, that same power selected the places for their future keeping. Particular banks, existing under State charters, were chosen. With these especial and particular arrangements were made, and the public moneys were deposited in their vaults. Henceforward these selected banks were to operate on the revenue and credit of the government; and thus the original scheme, promulgated in the annual message of December, 1829, was substantially carried into effect. Here were banks chosen by the treasury; all the arrangements with them made by the treasury; a set of duties to be performed by them to the treasury prescribed; and these banks were to hold the whole proceeds of the public revenue. In all this, Congress had neither part nor lot. No law had caused the removal of the deposits; no law had authorized the selection of deposit State banks; no law had prescribed the terms on which the revenues should be placed in such banks. From the beginning of the chapter to the end, it was all executive edict. And now, Gentlemen, I ask if it be not most remarkable, that, in a country professing to be under a government of laws, such great and important changes in one of its most essential and vital interests should be brought about without any change of law, without any enactment of the legislature whatever? Is such a power trusted to the executive of any government in which the executive is separated, by clear and well-defined lines, from the legislative department? The currency of the country stands on the same general ground as the commerce of the country. Both are intimately connected, and both are subjects of legal, not of executive, regulation.

It is worthy of notice, that the writers of the *Federalist*, in discussing the powers which the Constitution conferred on the President, made it matter of commendation, that it withdraws this subject altogether from his grasp. "He can prescribe no rules," say they, "concerning the commerce or *currency* of the country." And so we have been all taught to think, under all former administrations. But we have now seen that the President, and the President alone, does prescribe the rule concerning the currency. He makes it, and he alters it. He makes one rule for one branch of the revenue, and another rule for another. He makes one rule for the citizen of one State, and another for the citizen of another State. This, it is certain, is one part of the treasury order of July last.

But at last Congress interfered, and undertook to regulate the deposits of the public moneys. It passed the law of July, 1836, placing the subject under legal control, restraining the power of the executive, subjecting the banks to liabilities and duties, on the one hand, and securing them against executive favoritism, on the other. But this law contained another important provision; which was, that all the money in the treasury, beyond what was necessary for the current expenditures of the government, should be deposited with the States. This measure passed both houses by very unusual majorities, yet it hardly escaped a veto. It obtained only a cold assent, a slow, reluctant, and hesitating approval; and an early moment was seized to array against it a long list of objections. But the law passed. The money in the treasury beyond the sum of five millions was to go to the States. It has so gone, and the treasury for the present is relieved from the burden of a surplus. But now observe other coincidences. In the annual message of December, 1835, the President quoted the fact of the rapidly increasing sale of the public lands as proof of high national prosperity. He alluded to that subject, certainly with much satisfaction, and apparently in something of the tone of exultation. There was nothing said about monopoly, not a word about speculation, not a word about over-issues of paper, to pay for the lands. All was prosperous, all was full of evidence of a wise administration of government, all was joy and triumph.

But the idea of a deposit or distribution of the surplus money with the people suddenly damped this effervescing happiness.

The color of the rose was gone, and every thing now looked gloomy and black. Now no more felicitation or congratulation, on account of the rapid sales of the public lands; no more of this most decisive proof of national prosperity and happiness. The executive Muse takes up a melancholy strain. She sings of monopolies, of speculation, of worthless paper, of loss both of land and money, of the multiplication of banks, and the danger of paper issues; and the end of the canto, the catastrophe, is, that lands shall no longer be sold but for gold and silver alone. The object of all this is clear enough. It was to diminish the income from the public lands. No desire for such a diminution had been manifested, so long as the money was supposed to be likely to remain in the treasury. But a growing conviction that some other disposition must be made of the surplus, awakened attention to the means of preventing that surplus.

Toward the close of the last session, Gentlemen, a proposition was brought forward in Congress for such an alteration of the law as should admit payment for public lands to be made in nothing but gold and silver. The mover voted for his own proposition; but I do not recollect that any other member concurred in the vote. The proposition was rejected at once; but, as in other cases, that which Congress refused to do, the executive power did. Ten days after Congress adjourned, having had this matter before it, and having refused to act upon it by making any alteration in the existing laws, a treasury order was issued, commanding that very thing to be done which Congress had been requested and had refused to do. Just as in the case of the removal of the deposits, the executive power acted in this case also against the known, well understood, and recently expressed will of the representatives of the people. There never has been a moment when the legislative will would have sanctioned the object of that order; probably never a moment in which any twenty individual members of Congress would have concurred in it. The act was done without the assent of Congress, and against the well-known opinion of Congress. That act altered the law of the land, or purported to alter it, against the well-known will of the law-making power.

For one, I confess I see no authority whatever in the Constitution, or in any law, for this treasury order. Those who have undertaken to maintain it have placed it on grounds, not only

different, but inconsistent and contradictory. The reason which one gives, another rejects; one confutes what another argues. With one it is the joint resolution of 1816 which gave the authority; with another, it is the law of 1820; with a third, it is the general superintending power of the President; and this last argument, since it resolves itself into mere power, without stopping to point out the sources of that power, is not only the shortest, but in truth the most just. He is the most sensible, as well as the most candid reasoner, in my opinion, who places this treasury order on the ground of the pleasure of the executive, and stops there. I regard the joint resolution of 1816 as mandatory; as prescribing a legal rule; as putting this subject, in which all have so deep an interest, beyond the caprice, or the arbitrary pleasure, or the discretion, of the Secretary of the Treasury. I believe there is not the slightest legal authority, either in that officer or in the President, to make a distinction, and to say that paper may be received for debts at the custom-house, but that gold and silver only shall be received at the land offices. And now for the sequel.

At the commencement of the last session, as you know, Gentlemen, a resolution was brought forward in the Senate for annulling and abrogating this order, by Mr. Ewing, of Ohio, a gentleman of much intelligence, of sound principles, of vigorous and energetic character, whose loss from the service of the country I regard as a public misfortune. The Whig members all supported this resolution, and all the members, I believe, with the exception of some five or six, were very anxious in some way to get rid of the treasury order. But Mr. Ewing's resolution was too direct. It was deemed a pointed and ungracious attack on executive policy. It must therefore be softened, modified, qualified, made to sound less harsh to the ears of men in power, and to assume a plausible, polished, inoffensive character. It was accordingly put into the plastic hands of friends of the executive to be moulded and fashioned, so that it might have the effect of ridding the country of the obnoxious order, and yet not appear to question executive infallibility. All this did not answer. The late President is not a man to be satisfied with soft words; and he saw in the measure, even as it passed the two houses, a substantial repeal of the order. He is a man of boldness and decision; and he respects boldness and decision

in others. If you are his friend, he expects no flinching; and if you are his adversary, he respects you none the less for carrying your opposition to the full limits of honorable warfare. Gentlemen, I most sincerely regret the course of the President in regard to this bill, and certainly most highly disapprove it. But I do not suffer the mortification of having attempted to disguise and garnish it, in order to make it acceptable, and of still finding it thrown back in my face. All that was obtained by this ingenious, diplomatic, and over-courteous mode of enacting a law, was a response from the President and the Attorney-General, that the bill in question was obscure, ill penned, and not easy to be understood. The bill, therefore, was neither approved nor negatived. If it had been approved, the treasury order would have been annulled, though in a clumsy and objectionable manner. If it had been negatived, and returned to Congress, no doubt it would have been passed by two thirds of both houses, and in that way have become a law, and abrogated the order. But it was not approved, it was not returned; it was retained. It had passed the Senate in season; it had been sent to the House in season; but there it was suffered to lie so long without being called up, that it was completely in the power of the President when it finally passed that body; since he is not obliged to return bills which he does not approve, if not presented to him ten days before the end of the session. The bill was lost, therefore, and the treasury order remains in force. Here again the representatives of the people, in both houses of Congress, by majorities almost unprecedented, endeavored to abolish this obnoxious order. On hardly any subject, indeed, has opinion been so unanimous, either in or out of Congress. Yet the order remains.

And now, Gentlemen, I ask you, and I ask all men who have not voluntarily surrendered all power and all right of thinking for themselves, whether, from 1832 to the present moment, the executive authority has not effectually superseded the power of Congress, thwarted the will of the representatives of the people, and even of the people themselves, and taken the whole subject of the currency into its own grasp? In 1832, Congress desired to continue the bank of the United States, and a majority of the people desired it also; but the President opposed it, and his will prevailed. In 1833, Congress refused to remove the de-

posits; the President resolved upon it, however, and his will prevailed. Congress has never been willing to make a bank founded on the money and credit of the government, and administered, of course, by executive hands; but this was the President's object, and he attained it, in a great measure, by the treasury selection of deposit banks. In this particular, therefore, to a great extent, his will prevailed. In 1836, Congress refused to confine the receipts for public lands to gold and silver; but the President willed it, and his will prevailed. In 1837, both houses of Congress, by more than two thirds, passed a bill for restoring the former state of things by annulling the treasury order; but the President willed, notwithstanding, that the order should remain in force, and his will again prevailed. I repeat the question, therefore, and I would put it earnestly to every intelligent man, to every lover of our constitutional liberty, are we under the dominion of the law? or has the effectual government of the country, at least in all that regards the great interest of the currency, been in a single hand?

Gentlemen, I have done with the narrative of events and measures. I have done with the history of these successive steps, in the progress of executive power, towards a complete control over the revenue and the currency. The result is now all before us. These pretended reforms, these extraordinary exercises of power from an extraordinary zeal for the good of the people, what have they brought us to?

In 1829, the currency was declared to be *neither sound nor uniform*; a proposition, in my judgment, altogether at variance with the fact, because I do not believe there ever was a country of equal extent, in which paper formed any part of the circulation, that possessed a currency so sound, so uniform, so convenient, and so perfect in all respects, as the currency of this country, at the moment of the delivery of that message, in 1829.

But how is it now? Where has the improvement brought it? What has reform done? What has the great cry for hard money accomplished? Is the currency *uniform* now? Is money in New Orleans now as good, or nearly so, as money in New York? Are exchanges at par, or only at the same low rates as in 1829 and other years? Every one here knows that all the

benefits of this experiment are but injury and oppression ; all this reform, but aggravated distress.

And as to the *soundness* of the currency, how does that stand ? Are the causes of alarm less now than in 1829 ? Is there less bank paper in circulation ? Is there less fear of a general catastrophe ? Is property more secure, or industry more certain of its reward ? We all know, Gentlemen, that, during all this pretended warfare against all banks, banks have vastly increased. Millions upon millions of bank paper have been added to the circulation. Everywhere, and nowhere so much as where the present administration and its measures have been most zealously supported, banks have multiplied under State authority, since the decree was made that the Bank of the United States should be suffered to expire. Look at Mississippi, Missouri, Louisiana, Virginia, and other States. Do we not see that banking capital and bank paper are enormously increasing ? The opposition to banks, therefore, so much professed, whether it be real or whether it be but pretended, has not restrained either their number or their issues of paper. Both have vastly increased.

And now a word or two, Gentlemen, upon this hard-money scheme, and the fancies and the delusions to which it has given birth. Gentlemen, this is a subject of delicacy, and one which it is difficult to treat with sufficient caution, in a popular and occasional address like this. I profess to be a *bullionist*, in the usual and accepted sense of that word. I am for a solid specie basis for our circulation, and for specie as a part of the circulation, so far as it may be practicable and convenient. I am for giving no value to paper, merely as paper. I abhor paper ; that is to say, irredeemable paper, paper that may not be converted into gold or silver at the will of the holder. But while I hold to all this, I believe, also, that an exclusive gold and silver circulation is an utter impossibility in the present state of this country and of the world. We shall none of us ever see it ; and it is credulity and folly, in my opinion, to act under any such hope or expectation. The States will make banks, and these will issue paper ; and the longer the government of the United States neglects its duty in regard to measures for regulating the currency, the greater will be the amount of bank paper over-spreading the country. Of this I entertain not a particle of doubt.

While I thus hold to the absolute and indispensable necessity of gold and silver, as the foundation of our circulation, I yet think nothing more absurd and preposterous, than unnatural and strained efforts to import specie. There is but so much specie in the world, and its amount cannot be greatly or suddenly increased. Indeed, there are reasons for supposing that its amount has recently diminished, by the quantity used in manufactures, and by the diminished products of the mines. The existing amount of specie, however, must support the paper circulations, and the systems of currency, not of the United States only, but of other nations also. One of its great uses is to pass from country to country, for the purpose of settling occasional balances in commercial transactions. It always finds its way, naturally and easily, to places where it is needed for these uses. But to take extraordinary pains to bring it where the course of trade does not bring it, where the state of debt and credit does not require it to be, and then to endeavor, by unnecessary and injurious regulations, treasury orders, accumulations at the mint, and other contrivances, there to retain it, is a course of policy bordering, as it appears to me, on political insanity. It is boasted that we have seventy-five or eighty millions of specie now in the country. But what more senseless, what more absurd, than this boast, if there is a balance against us abroad, of which payment is desired sooner than remittances of our own products are likely to make that payment? What more miserable than to boast of having that which is not ours, which belongs to others, and which the convenience of others, and our own convenience also, require that they should possess? If Boston were in debt to New York, would it be wise in Boston, instead of paying its debt, to contrive all possible means of obtaining specie from the New York banks, and hoarding it at home? And yet this, as I think, would be precisely as sensible as the course which the government of the United States at present pursues. We have, beyond all doubt, a great amount of specie in the country, but it does not answer its accustomed end, it does not perform its proper duty. It neither goes abroad to settle balances against us, and thereby quiet those who have demands upon us; nor is it so disposed of at home as to sustain the circulation to the extent which the circumstances of the times require. A great part of it is in the Western banks,

in the land offices, on the roads through the wilderness, on the passages over the Lakes, from the land offices to the deposit banks, and from the deposit banks back to the land offices. Another portion is in the hands of buyers and sellers of specie; of men in the West, who sell land-office money to the new settlers for a high premium. Another portion, again, is kept in private hands, to be used when circumstances shall tempt to the purchase of lands. And, Gentlemen, I am inclined to think, so loud has been the cry about hard money, and so sweeping the denunciation of all paper, that private holding, or hoarding, prevails to some extent in different parts of the country. These eighty millions of specie, therefore, really do us little good. We are weaker in our circulation, I have no doubt, our credit is feebler, money is scarcer with us, at this moment, than if twenty millions of this specie were shipped to Europe, and general confidence thereby restored.

Gentlemen, I will not say that some degree of pressure might not have come upon us, if the treasury order had not issued. I will not say that there has not been over-trading, and over-production, and a too great expansion of bank circulation. This may all be so, and the last-mentioned evil, it was easy to foresee, was likely to happen when the United States discontinued their own bank. But what I do say is, that, acting upon the state of things as it actually existed, and is now actually existing, the treasury order has been, and now is, productive of great distress. It acts upon a state of things which gives extraordinary force to its stroke, and extraordinary point to its sting. It arrests specie, when the free use and circulation of specie are most important; it cripples the banks, at a moment when the banks more than ever need all their means. It makes the merchant unable to remit, when remittance is necessary for his own credit, and for the general adjustment of commercial balances. I am not now discussing the general question, whether prices must not come down, and adjust themselves anew to the amount of bullion existing in Europe and America. I am dealing only with the measures of our own government on the subject of the currency, and I insist that these measures have been most unfortunate, and most ruinous in their effects on the ordinary means of our circulation at home, and on our ability of remittance abroad.

Their effects, too, on domestic exchanges, by deranging and misplacing the specie which is in the country, are most disastrous. Let him who has lent an ear to all these promises of a more uniform currency see how he can now sell his draft on New Orleans or Mobile. Let the Northern manufacturers and mechanics, those who have sold the products of their labor to the South, and heretofore realized the prices with little loss of exchange, let them try present facilities. Let them see what reform of the currency has done for them. Let them inquire whether, in this respect, their condition is better or worse than it was five or six years ago.

Gentlemen, I hold this disturbance of the measure of value, and the means of payment and exchange, this derangement, and, if I may so say, this violation of the currency, to be one of the most unpardonable of political faults. He who tampers with the currency robs labor of its bread. He panders, indeed, to greedy capital, which is keen-sighted, and may shift for itself; but he beggars labor, which is honest, unsuspecting, and too busy with the present to calculate for the future. The prosperity of the working classes lives, moves, and has its being in established credit, and a steady medium of payment. All sudden changes destroy it. Honest industry never comes in for any part of the spoils in that scramble which takes place when the currency of a country is disordered. Did wild schemes and projects ever benefit the industrious? Did irredeemable bank paper ever enrich the laborious? Did violent fluctuations ever do good to him who depends on his daily labor for his daily bread? Certainly never. All these things may gratify greediness for sudden gain, or the rashness of daring speculation; but they can bring nothing but injury and distress to the homes of patient industry and honest labor. Who are they that profit by the present state of things? They are not the many, but the few. They are speculators, brokers, dealers in money, and lenders of money at exorbitant interest. Small capitalists are crushed, and, their means being dispersed, as usual, in various parts of the country, and this miserable policy having destroyed exchanges, they have no longer either money or credit. And all classes of labor partake, and must partake, in the same calamity. And what consolation for all this is it, that the public lands are paid for in specie? that, whatever embarrassment and distress pervade the

country, the Western wilderness is thickly sprinkled over with eagles and dollars? that gold goes weekly from Milwaukee and Chicago to Detroit, and back again from Detroit to Milwaukee and Chicago, and performs similar feats of egress and regress in many other instances, in the Western States? It is remarkable enough, that, with all this sacrifice of general convenience, with all this sky-rending clamor for government payments in specie, government, after all, never gets a dollar. So far as I know, the United States have not now a single specie dollar in the world. If they have, where is it? The gold and silver collected at the land-offices is sent to the deposit banks; it is there placed to the credit of the government, and thereby becomes the property of the bank. The whole revenue of the government, therefore, after all, consists in mere bank credits; that very sort of security which the friends of the administration have so much denounced.

Remember, Gentlemen, in the midst of this deafening din against all banks, that, if it shall create such a panic as shall shut up the banks, it will shut up the treasury of the United States also.

Gentlemen, I would not willingly be a prophet of ill. I most devoutly wish to see a better state of things; and I believe the repeal of the treasury order would tend very much to bring about that better state of things. And I am of opinion, that, sooner or later, the order will be repealed. I think it must be repealed. I think the East, West, North, and South will demand its repeal. But, Gentlemen, I feel it my duty to say, that, if I should be disappointed in this expectation, I see no immediate relief to the distresses of the community. I greatly fear, even, that the worst is not yet.* I look for severer distresses; for extreme difficulties in exchange, for far greater inconveniences in remittance, and for a sudden fall in prices. Our condition is one which is not to be tampered with, and the repeal of the treasury

* On the 10th of June following the delivery of this speech, all the banks in the city of New York, by common consent, suspended the payment of their notes in specie. On the next day, the same step was taken by the banks of Boston and the vicinity, and the example was followed by all the banks south of New York, as they received intelligence of the suspension of specie payments in that city. On the 15th of June, (just three months from the day this speech was delivered,) President Van Buren issued his proclamation calling an extra session of Congress for the first Monday of September.

order, being something which government can do, and which will do good, the public voice is right in demanding that repeal. It is true, if repealed now, the relief will come late. Nevertheless its repeal or abrogation is a thing to be insisted on, and pursued, till it shall be accomplished. This executive control over the currency, this power of discriminating, by treasury order, between one man's debt and another man's debt, is a thing not to be endured in a free country; and it should be the constant, persisting demand of all true Whigs, "Rescind the illegal treasury order, restore the rule of the law, place all branches of the revenue on the same grounds, make men's rights equal, and leave the government of the country where the Constitution leaves it, in the hands of the representatives of the people in Congress." This point should never be surrendered or compromised. Whatever is established, let it be equal, and let it be legal. Let men know, to-day, what money may be required of them to-morrow. Let the rule be open and public, on the pages of the statute-book, not a secret, in the executive breast.

Gentlemen, in the session which has now just closed, I have done my utmost to effect a direct and immediate repeal of the treasury order.

I have voted for a bill anticipating the payment of the French and Neapolitan indemnities by an advance from the treasury.

I have voted with great satisfaction for the restoration of duties on goods destroyed in the great conflagration in this city.

I have voted for a deposit with the States of the surplus which may be in the treasury at the end of the year. All these measures have failed; and it is for you, and for our fellow-citizens throughout the country, to decide whether the public interest would, or would not, have been promoted by their success.

But I find, Gentlemen, that I am committing an unpardonable trespass on your indulgent patience. I will pursue these remarks no further. And yet I cannot persuade myself to take leave of you without reminding you, with the utmost deference and respect, of the important part assigned to you in the political concerns of your country, and of the great influence of your opinions, your example, and your efforts upon the general prosperity and happiness.

Whigs of New York! Patriotic citizens of this great metropolis! Lovers of constitutional liberty, bound by interest and by affection to the institutions of your country, Americans in

heart and in principle!—you are ready, I am sure, to fulfil all the duties imposed upon you by your situation, and demanded of you by your country. You have a central position; your city is the point from which intelligence emanates, and spreads in all directions over the whole land. Every hour carries reports of your sentiments and opinions to the verge of the Union. You cannot escape the responsibility which circumstances have thrown upon you. You must live and act, on a broad and conspicuous theatre, either for good or for evil to your country. You cannot shrink from your public duties; you cannot obscure yourselves, nor bury your talent. In the common welfare, in the common prosperity, in the common glory of Americans, you have a stake of value not to be calculated. You have an interest in the preservation of the Union, of the Constitution, and of the true principles of the government, which no man can estimate. You act for yourselves, and for the generations that are to come after you; and those who ages hence shall bear your names, and partake your blood, will feel, in their political and social condition, the consequences of the manner in which you discharge your political duties.

Having fulfilled, then, on your part and on mine, though feebly and imperfectly on mine, the offices of kindness and mutual regard required by this occasion, shall we not use it to a higher and nobler purpose? Shall we not, by this friendly meeting, refresh our patriotism, rekindle our love of constitutional liberty, and strengthen our resolutions of public duty? Shall we not, in all honesty and sincerity, with pure and disinterested love of country, as Americans, looking back to the renown of our ancestors, and looking forward to the interests of our posterity, here, to-night, pledge our mutual faith to hold on to the last to our professed principles, to the doctrines of true liberty, and to the Constitution of the country, let who will prove true, or who will prove recreant? Whigs of New York! I meet you in advance, and give you my pledge for my own performance of these duties, without qualification and without reserve. Whether in public life or in private life, in the Capitol or at home, I mean never to desert them. I mean never to forget that I have a country, to which I am bound by a thousand ties; and the stone which is to lie on the ground that shall cover me, shall not bear the name of a son ungrateful to his native land.

Reception at Wheeling

Reception at Wheeling*

THE following toast having been proposed, — “Our distinguished guest, — his manly and untiring, though unsuccessful, efforts to sustain the supremacy of the Constitution and the laws against the encroachments of executive power, and to avert the catastrophe that now impends over the country, have given him a new claim to the gratitude of his countrymen, and added a new lustre to that fame which was already imperishably identified with the history of our institutions,” — Mr. Webster rose and responded, in substance, as follows.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FELLOW-CITIZENS: — I cannot be indifferent to the manifestations of regard with which I have been greeted by you, nor can I suffer any show of delicacy to prevent me from expressing my thanks for your kindness.

I travel, Gentlemen, for the purpose of seeing the country, and of seeing what constitutes the important part of every country, the people. I find everywhere much to excite, and much to gratify admiration; and the pleasure I experience is only diminished by remembering the unparalleled state of distress which I have left behind me, and by the apprehension, rather than the feeling, of severe evils, which I find to exist wherever I go.

I cannot enable those who have not witnessed it to comprehend the full extent of the suffering in the Eastern cities. It was painful, indeed, to behold it. So many bankruptcies among great and small dealers, so much property sacrificed, so many industrious men altogether broken up in their business, so many families reduced from competence to want, so many hopes crushed, so many happy prospects for ever clouded, and such

* A Speech delivered on the 17th of May, 1837, at a Public Dinner given to Mr. Webster by the Citizens of Wheeling, Virginia.

fearful looking for still greater calamities,—all united form such a mass of evil as I had never expected to see, except as the result of war, a pestilence, or some other external calamity.

I have no wish, in the present state of things, nor should I have, indeed, if the state of things were different, to obtrude the expression of my political sentiments on such of my fellow-citizens as I may happen to meet; nor, on the other hand, have I any motive for concealing them, or suppressing their expression, whenever others desire that I should make them known. Indeed, on the great topics that now engage public attention, I hope I may flatter myself that my opinions are already known.

Recent evils have not at all surprised me, except that they have come sooner and faster than I had anticipated. But, though not surprised, I am afflicted; I feel any thing but pleasure in this early fulfilment of my own predictions. Much injury is done, which the wisest future counsels can never repair, and much more that can never be remedied but by such counsels and by the lapse of time. From 1832 to the present moment, I have foreseen this result. I may safely say I have foreseen it, because I have foretold and proclaimed its approach in every important discussion and debate in the public body of which I am a member. In 1832, I happened to meet with a citizen of Wheeling, now present, who has this day reminded me of what I then anticipated, as the result of the measures which the administration appeared to be adopting in regard to the currency. In the summer of the next year, 1833, I was here, and suggested to friends what I knew to be resolved upon by the executive, namely, the removal of the deposits of the public funds from the Bank of the United States, which was announced two months afterwards. That was the avowed and declared commencement of the “experiment.” You know, Gentlemen, the obloquy then and since cast upon those of us who opposed this “experiment.” You know that we have been called bank agents, bank advocates, bank hirelings. You know that it has been a thousand times said, that the experiment worked admirably, that nothing could do better, that it was the highest possible evidence of the political wisdom and sagacity of its contrivers, and that none opposed it or doubted its efficiency but the wicked or the stupid. Well, Gentlemen, here is the end, if this is the end, of this notable “experiment.” Its singular wis-

dom has come to this; its fine workings have wrought out an almost general bankruptcy.

Its lofty promises, its grandeur, its flashes, that threw other men's sense and understanding back into the shade, where are they now? Here is the "fine of fines and the recovery of recoveries." Its panics, its scoffs, its jeers, its jests, its gibes at all former experience, — its cry of "a new policy," which was so much to delight and astonish mankind, — to this conclusion has it come at last.

" But yesterday, it might
Have stood against the world ; now lies it there,
And none so poor to do it reverence ! "

It is with no feelings of boasting or triumph, it is with no disposition to arrogate superior wisdom or discernment, but it is with mortification, with humiliation, with unaffected grief and affliction, that I contemplate the condition of difficulty and distress to which this country, so vigorous, so great, so enterprising, and so rich in internal wealth, has been brought by the policy of her government.

We learn to-day that most of the Eastern banks have stopped payment, the deposit banks as well as others. The experiment has exploded. That bubble, which so many of us have all along regarded as the offspring of conceit, presumption, and political quackery, has burst. A general suspension of payment must be the result; a result which has come even sooner than was predicted. Where is now that better currency that was promised? Where is that specie circulation? Where are those rivers of gold and silver, which were to fill the treasury of the government as well as the pockets of the people? Has the government a single hard dollar? Has the treasury any thing in the world but credit and deposits in banks that have already suspended payment? How are public creditors now to be paid in specie? How are the deposits, which the law requires to be made with the States on the 1st of July, now to be made? We must go back to the beginning, and take a new start. Every step in our financial banking system, since 1832, has been a false step; it has been a step which has conducted us farther and farther from the path of safety.

The discontinuance of the national bank, the illegal removal of the deposits, the accumulation of the public revenue in

banks selected by the executive, and for a long time subject to no legal regulation or restraint, and finally the unauthorized and illegal treasury order, have brought us where we are.* The destruction of the national bank was the signal for the creation of an unprecedented number of new State banks, often with nominal capitals, out of all proportion to the business of the quarters where they were established. These banks, lying under no restraint from the general government or any of its institutions, issued paper money corresponding to their own sense of their immediate interests and hopes of gain. The deposit with the State banks of the whole public revenue, then accumulated to a vast amount, and making this deposit without any legal restraint or control whatever, increased both the power and disposition of these banks for extensive issues. In this way the government seems to have administered every possible provocation to the banks to induce them to extend their circulation. It uniformly, zealously, and successfully opposed the land bill, a most useful measure, by which accumulation in the treasury would have been prevented; and, as if it desired and sought this accumulation, it finally resisted, with all its power, the deposit among the States. It is urged as a reason for the present overthrow, that an extraordinary spirit of speculation has gone abroad, and has been manifested particularly and strongly in the endeavor to purchase the public lands; but has not every act of the government directly encouraged this spirit? It accumulated revenue which it did not need, all of which is left in the deposit banks. The banks had money to lend, and there were enough who were ready to borrow, for the purpose of purchasing the public lands at government prices. The public treasury was thus made the great and efficient means of effecting those purchases which have since been so much denounced as extravagant speculation and extensive monopoly. These purchasers borrowed the public money; they used the public money to buy the public property; they speculated on the strength of the public money; and while all this was going on, and every man saw it, the administration resisted, to the utmost of its power, every attempt to withdraw this money from the banks and from the hands of those speculators, and distribute it among the people to whom it belonged.

If, then, there has been over-trading, the government has

encouraged it; if there have been rash speculations in the public lands, the government has furnished the means out of the treasury. These unprecedented sales of the public domain were boasted of as proofs of a happy state of things, and of a wise administration of the government, down to the moment when Congress, in opposition to executive wishes, passed the distribution law, thus withdrawing the surplus revenue from the deposit banks. The success of that measure compelled a change in the executive policy, as the accumulation of a vast amount of money in the treasury was no longer desirable. This is the most favorable motive to which I can ascribe the treasury order of July. It is now said that that order was issued for the purpose of enforcing a strict execution of the law which forbids the allowance of credits upon purchases of the public lands; but there was no such credit allowed before; not an hour was given beyond the time of sale. In this respect, the order produces no difference whatever. Its only effect is to require an immediate payment in specie, whereas, before, an immediate payment in the bills of specie-paying banks was demanded. There is no more credit in the one case than in the other; and the government gets just as much specie in one case as in the other; for no sooner is the specie, which the purchaser is compelled to procure, often at great charge, paid to the receiver, than it is sent to the deposit banks, and the government has credit for it on the books of the bank; but the specie itself is again sold by the bank, or disposed of as it sees fit. It is evident that the government gets nothing by all this, though the purchasers of small tracts are put to great trouble and expense. No one gains any thing but the banks and the brokers. It is, moreover, most true that the art of man could not have devised a plan more effectually to give to the large purchasers or speculators a decided preference and advantage over small purchasers, who bought for actual settlement, than the treasury order of July, 1836. The stoppage of the banks, however, has now placed the actual settler in a still more unfortunate situation. How is he to obtain money to pay for his quarter-section? He must travel three or four times as many miles for it as he has dollars to pay, even if he should be able to obtain it at the end of that journey.

I will not say that other causes, at home and abroad, have not had an agency in bringing about the present derangement.

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I know that credits have been used beyond all former example. It is probable the spirit of trade has been too highly excited, and that the pursuit of business may have been pressed too fast and too far. All this I am ready to admit. But instead of doing any thing to abate this tendency, the government has been the prime instrument of fostering and encouraging it. It has parted voluntarily, and by advice, with all control over the actual currency of the country. It has given a free and full scope to the spirit of banking; it has aided the spirit of speculation with the public treasures; and it has done all this, in the midst of loud-sounding promises of an exclusive specie medium, and a professed detestation of all banking institutions.

It is vain, therefore, to say that the present state of affairs is owing, not to the acts of government, but to other causes, over which government could exercise no control. Much of it *is* owing to the course of the national government; and what is not so, is owing to causes the operation of which government was bound in duty to use all its legal powers to control.

Is there an intelligent man in the community, at this moment, who believes that, if the Bank of the United States had been continued, if the deposits had not been removed, if the specie circular had not been issued, the financial affairs of the country would have been in as bad a state as they now are? When certain consequences are repeatedly depicted and foretold from particular causes, when the manner in which these consequences will be produced is precisely pointed out beforehand, and when the consequences come in the manner foretold, who will stand up and declare, that, notwithstanding all this, there is no connection between the cause and the consequence, and that all these effects are attributable to some other causes, nobody knows what?

No doubt but we shall hear every cause but the true one assigned for the present distress. It will be laid to the opposition in and out of Congress; it will be laid to the bank; it will be laid to the merchants; it will be laid to the manufacturers: it will be laid to the tariff; it will be laid to the north star, or to the malign influence of the last comet, whose tail swept near or across the orbit of our earth, before we shall be allowed to ascribe it to its just, main causes, a tampering with the currency, and an attempt to stretch executive power over a subject not constitutionally within its reach.

We have heard, Gentlemen, of the suspension of some of the Eastern banks only; but I fear the same course must be adopted by all the banks throughout the country. The United States Bank, now a mere State institution, with no public deposits, no aid from government, but, on the contrary, long an object of bitter persecution by it, was, at our last advices, still firm. But can we expect of that bank to make sacrifices to continue specie payment? If it continue to do so now that the deposit banks have stopped, the government, if possible, will draw from it its last dollar, in order to keep up a pretence of making its own payments in specie. I shall be glad if this institution find it prudent and proper to hold out;* but as it owes no more duty to the government than any other bank, and, of course, much less than the deposit banks, I cannot see any ground for demanding from it efforts and sacrifices to favor the government, which those holding the public money, and owing duty to the government, are unwilling or unable to make. Nor do I see how the New England banks can stand alone in the general crash. I believe those in Massachusetts are very sound and entirely solvent; I have every confidence in their ability to pay: and I shall rejoice if, amidst the present wreck, we find them able to withstand the storm. At the same time, I confess I shall not be disappointed, if they, seeing no public object to be attained proportioned to the private loss, and individual sacrifice and ruin, which must result from resorting to the means necessary to enable them to hold out, should not be distinguished from their Southern and Western neighbors.

I believe, Gentlemen, the "experiment" must go through. I believe every part and portion of our country will have a satisfactory taste of the "better currency." I believe we shall be blest again with the currency of 1812, *when money was the only uncurrent species of property*. We have, amidst all the distress that surrounds us, men in and out of power, who condemn a national bank in every form, maintain the efficacy and efficiency of State banks for domestic exchange, and, amidst all the sufferings and terrors of the "experiment," cry out, that they are establishing "a better currency." The "experiment,"—the experiment upon what? The experiment of one man upon the hap-

* The mail of that day brought advice of its suspension. See the note on page 228.

pininess, the well-being, and, I may almost say, upon the lives, of twelve millions of human beings,—an “experiment” that found us in health, that found us with the best currency on the face of the earth, the same from the North to the South, from Boston to St. Louis, equalling silver or gold in any part of our Union, and possessing the unlimited confidence of foreign countries, and which leaves us crushed, ruined, without means at home, and without credit abroad.

This word “experiment” appears likely to get into no enviable notoriety. It may probably be held, in future, to signify any thing which is too excruciating to be borne, like a pang of the rheumatism or an extraordinary twinge of the gout. Indeed, from the experience we now have, we may judge that the bad eminence of the Inquisition itself may be superseded by it, and if one shall be hereafter stretched upon the rack, or broken on the wheel, it may be said, while all his bones are cracking, all his muscles snapping, all his veins are pouring, that he is only passing into a better state through the delightful process of an “experiment.”

Gentlemen, you will naturally ask, Where is this to end, and what is to be the remedy? These are questions of momentous importance; but probably the proper moment has not come for considering this. We are yet in the midst of the whirlwind. Every man's thoughts are turned to his own immediate preservation. When the blast is over, and we have breathing-time, the country must take this subject, this all-important subject of relief for the present and security for the future, into its most serious consideration. It will, undoubtedly, first engage the attention and wisdom of Congress. It will call on public men, intrusted with public affairs, to lay aside party and private preferences and prejudices, and unite in the great work of redeeming the country from this state of disaster and disgrace. All that I mean at present to say is, that the government of the United States stands chargeable, in my opinion, with a gross dereliction from duty, in leaving the currency of the country entirely at the mercy of others, without seeking to exercise over it any control whatever. The *means* of exercising this control rest in the wisdom of Congress, but the duty I hold to be imperative. It is a power that cannot be yielded to others with safety to itself or to them. It might as well give up to the States

the power of making peace or war, and leave the twenty-six independent sovereignties to select their own foes, raise their own troops, and conclude their own terms of peace. It might as well leave the States to impose their own duties and regulate their own terms and treaties of commerce, as to give up control over the currency in which all are interested.

The present government has been in operation forty-eight years. During forty of these forty-eight years we have had a national institution performing the duties of a fiscal agent to the government, and exercising a most useful control over the domestic exchanges and over the currency of the country. The first institution was chartered on the ground that such an institution was *necessary* to the safe and economical administration of the treasury department in the collection and disbursement of its revenue. The experience of the new government had clearly proved this necessity. At that time, however, there were those who doubted the power of Congress, under the provisions of the Constitution, to incorporate a bank; but a majority of both houses were of a different opinion. President Washington sanctioned the measure, and among those who entertained doubts on the subject, the statesmen of most weight and consideration in the Union, and whose opinions were entitled to the highest respect, yielded to the opinion of Congress and the country, and considered it a settled question. Among those who first doubted of the power of the government to establish a national bank, was one whose name should never be mentioned without respect, one for whom I can say I feel as high a veneration as one man can or ought to feel for another, one who was intimately associated with all the provisions of the Constitution, — Mr. Madison. Yet, when Congress had decided on the measure, by large majorities, when the President had approved it, when the judicial tribunals had sanctioned it, when public opinion had deliberately and decidedly confirmed it, *he* looked on the subject as definitely and finally settled. The reasoners of our day think otherwise. No decision, no public sanction, no judgment of the tribunals, is allowed to weigh against their respect for their own opinions. They rush to the argument as to that of a new question, despising all lights but that of their own unclouded sagacity, and careless alike of the venerable living and of the mighty dead. They poise this im-

portant question upon some small points of their own slender logic, and decide it on the strength of their own unintelligible metaphysics. It never enters into all their thoughts that this is a question to be judged of on broad, comprehensive, and practical grounds; still less does it occur to them that an exposition of the Constitution, contemporaneous with its earliest existence, acted on for nearly half a century, in which the original framers and government officers of the highest note concurred, ought to have any weight in their decision, or inspire them with the least doubt of the accuracy and soundness of their own opinions. They soar so high in the regions of self-respect as to be far beyond the reach of all such considerations.

For sound views upon the subject of a national bank, I would commend you, Gentlemen, to the messages of Mr. Madison, and to his letter on the subject. They are the views of a truly great man and a statesman.

As the first Bank of the United States had its origin in necessity, so had the second; and, although there was something of misfortune, and certainly something of mismanagement, in its early career, no candid and intelligent man can, for a moment, doubt or deny its usefulness, or that it fully accomplished the object for which it was created. Exchanges, during all the later years of its existence, were easily effected, and a currency the most uniform of any in the world existed throughout the country. The opponents of these institutions did not deny that general prosperity and a happy state of things existed at the time they were in operation, but contended that equal prosperity would exist without them, while specie would take the place of their issues as a circulating medium. How have their words been verified? Both in the case of the first bank and that of the last, a general suspension of specie payments has happened in about a year from the time they were suffered to expire, and a universal confusion and distrust prevailed. The charter of the first bank expired in 1811, and all the State banks, south of New England, stopped payment in 1812. The charter of the late bank expired in March, 1836, and in May, 1837, a like distrust, and a like suspension of the State banks, have taken place.

The same results, we may readily suppose, are attributable to the same causes, and we must look to the experience and wis-

dom of the people and of Congress to apply the requisite remedy. I will not say the only remedy is a national bank; but I will say that, in my opinion the only sure remedy for the evils that now prey upon us is the assumption, by the delegates of the people in the national government, of some lawful control over the finances of the nation, and a power of regulating its currency.

Gentlemen, allow me again to express my thanks for the kindness you have shown me this day, and in conclusion to assure you, that, though a representative in the federal government of but a small section, when compared with the vast territory that acknowledges allegiance to that government, I shall never forget that I am acting for the whole country, and, so far as I am capable, will pledge myself impartially to use every exertion for that country's welfare.

Reception at Madison

Introductory Note

THE following account of Mr. Webster's visit to Madison, Indiana, is taken from the "Republican Banner," of the 7th of June, 1837.

"DANIEL WEBSTER visited our town on Thursday last. Notice had been given the day previous of the probable time of his arrival. At the hour designated, crowds of citizens from the town and country thronged the quay. A gun from the Ben Franklin, as she swept gracefully round the point, gave notice of his approach, and was answered by a gun from the shore. Gun followed gun in quick succession, from boat and shore, and the last of the old national salute was echoing from hill and glen as the Franklin reached the wharf. Mr. Webster was immediately waited on by the committee appointed to receive him, and, attended by them, a committee of invitation from Cincinnati, and several gentlemen from Louisville, he landed amidst the cheers and acclamations of the assembled multitude. He was seated in an elegant barouche, supported by Governor Hendricks and John King, Esq., and, with the different committees, and a large procession of citizens in barouches, on horseback, and on foot, formed under the direction of Messrs. Wharton and Payne of the committee of arrangements, marshals of the day, proceeded to the place appointed for his reception, an arbor erected at the north end of the market-house, fronting the large area formed by the intersection of Main and Main Cross Streets and the public square, and tastefully decorated with shrubbery, evergreens, and wreaths of flowers. In the background appeared portraits of Washington and Lafayette, the Declaration of Independence, and several other appropriate badges and emblems, while in front a flag floated proudly on the breeze, bearing for its motto the ever-memorable sentiment with which he concluded his immortal speech in defence of the Constitution, 'LIBERTY AND UNION, NOW AND FOR EVER, ONE AND INSEPARABLE.' When the procession arrived, Mr. Webster ascended the stand in the arbor, supported by Governor Hendricks and the committee of arrangements, when he was appropriately and eloquently addressed by J. G. Marshall, Esq., on behalf of the citizens, to which he responded in a speech of an hour's length."

The following correspondence preceded Mr. Webster's visit.

“ *Louisville, May 30, 1837.*

“ HON. DANIEL WEBSTER : —

“ Sir, — Your fellow-citizens of the town of Madison, Indiana, deeply impressed with a sense of the obligations which they and all the true lovers of constitutional liberty, and friends to our happy and glorious Union, owe you for the many prominent services rendered by you to their beloved, though now much agitated and injured country, having appointed the undersigned a committee through whom to tender you their salutations and the hospitalities of their town, desire us earnestly to request you to partake of a public dinner, or such other expression of the high estimation in which they hold you as may be most acceptable, at such time as you may designate.

“ Entertaining the hope that you may find it convenient to comply with this request of our constituents and ourselves, we beg leave, with sentiments of the most profound respect and regard, to subscribe ourselves,

“ Your fellow-citizens,

W. LYLE, W. J. McCLURE, WM. F. COLLUM, A. W. PITCHER, JAS. E. LEWIS, D. L. McCLURE,	}	Committee.”
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ANSWER.

“ *Louisville, May 30, 1837.*

“ GENTLEMEN, — I feel much honored by the communication which I have received from you, expressing the friendly sentiments of my fellow-citizens of Madison, and desiring that I should pay them a visit.

“ Although so kind an invitation, meeting me at so great a distance, was altogether unlooked for, I had yet determined not to pass so interesting a point on the Ohio without making some short stay at it. I shall leave this place on Thursday morning, and will stop at Madison, and shall be most happy to see any of its citizens who may desire to meet me. I must pray to be excused from a formal public dinner, as well from a regard to the time which it will be in my power to pass with you, as from a general wish, whenever it is practicable, to avoid every thing like ceremony or show in my intercourse with my fellow-citizens.

“ You truly observe, Gentlemen, that the country at the present moment is agitated. I think, too, that you are right in saying it is injured; that is, I think public measures of a very injurious character and tendency have been unfortunately adopted. But our case is not one that leads us to much despondency. The country, the happy and glorious country in which you and I live, is great, free, and full of resources; and, in the main, an intelligent and patriotic spirit pervades the community. These will bring all things right. Whatsoever has been injudiciously or rashly done may be corrected by wiser counsels. Nothing can, for any great length of time, depress the great interests of the people of the United States, if wisdom and honest good-sense shall prevail in their public measures. Our present point of suffering is the *currency*. In

my opinion, this is an interest with the preservation of which Congress is charged, solemnly and deeply charged. A uniform currency was one of the great objects of the Union. If we fail to maintain it, we so far fail of what was intended by the national Constitution. Let us strive to avert this reproach from that government and that Union, which make us, in so many respects, ONE PEOPLE! Be assured, that to the attainment of this end every power and faculty of my mind shall be directed; and may Providence so prosper us, that no one shall be able to say, that in any thing this glorious union of the States has come short of fulfilling either its own duties or the just expectations of the people.

"With sentiments of true regard, Gentlemen, I am your much obliged friend and fellow-citizen,

" DANIEL WEBSTER.

<p>" To W. LYLE, W. J. McCLURE, WM. F. COLLUM, A. W. PITCHER, JAMES E. LEWIS, D. L. McCLURE,</p>	}	Committee."
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The address of Mr. Marshall, above alluded to, was as follows:—

" SIR,—The people now assembled around you, through me, the humble organ of their selection, do most sincerely and cordially welcome you to Madison. In extending to you the most liberal hospitality, they do no more, however, than they would be inclined to do towards the humblest citizen of our common country. But this public and formal manifestation of the feeling of regard which they entertain for you is intended to do more than inform you of the simple fact that here you can find food and shelter, and partake with them of the pleasures of the social circle. If this were all, it might be communicated in a manner more acceptable, by extending to you the hand of friendship and kindly pointing you to the family board; but by this public parade, this assembling of the people around you, it is intended to give you that consolation, (most grateful and cheering to every true American heart,) *the people's* approbation of your acts as a public servant. This is done, not with that abject feeling which characterizes the homage of subjects, but with that nobler feeling which prompts freemen to honor and esteem those who have been their country's benefactors. Prompted by such feeling, the patriots of the Revolution delighted to honor the *father of our country*. He led his armies to victory, and thus wrested the liberties of his countrymen from the grasp of a tyrant; and may we not from like impulses manifest gratitude towards those who, by the power of their intellects, have effectually rebuked erroneous principles, which were evidently undermining and endangering the very existence of our beloved Union? Yes, Sir, our country has now nothing to fear from external violence. It is a danger which the whole country can see on its first approach, and every arm will be nerved at once to repel it; it can be met at the point of the bayonet, and millions would now, as in days that are past, be ready to shed their blood in defence of their country.

But, Sir, in *those* who artfully excite the passions and prejudices of the people, and, by presenting to them the most plausible pretences (for their own selfish purposes), lead them thoughtlessly to abandon the sacred principles upon which our government is founded, and to reject the measures which can alone promote the prosperity of the country, — in such we meet an enemy against whom the most daring bravery of the soldier is totally unavailing.

“The injury which is inflicted is not at first felt; time is required to develop it; and when developed, the closest investigation may be necessary to trace it to its cause; this the people may not be able to accomplish. This enemy to the country can only be discerned by the keen eye of the statesman, and met and conquered by the power of his intellect. And he who is successful in thus defending his country may well be held in grateful remembrance by his fellow-citizens. It is for such reasons, Sir, that we have presented to you these testimonials of our approbation. Though personally a stranger to us, your public character, your masterly efforts in defence of the Constitution, the services you have rendered the West, and the principles and measures which you have so ably advocated, are known and approved, and I hope will ever be remembered by us. And although some of your efforts have proved for the time unsuccessful, it is to be hoped they would now have a different effect. When the old and established measures of any government have been abandoned for new ones, simply as an *experiment*, and when that experiment, if it does not produce, is, to say the least, immediately followed by, ruin and distress in every part of the country, may we not hope that men will at least calmly and dispassionately hear and weigh the reasons why a different policy should be adopted? But if the people’s representatives cannot be convinced of the error into which they have been led, it is high time the people themselves should awake from their slumbers. A dark cloud hangs over the land, so thick, so dark, a ray of hope can hardly penetrate it. But shall the people gird on their armor and march to battle? No, Sir; it is a battle which they must fight through the ballot-box; and perhaps they do not know against what to direct their effort; they are almost in a state of despondency, ready to conclude that they are driven to the verge of ruin by a kind of irresistible destiny. The cause of the evil can be discovered only by investigation; and to their public men they must look for information and for wisdom to direct them. But, Sir, it is not our object to relate to you our grievances, or recount the past services which you have rendered your country. We wish to cheer you on to increased efforts in urging the measures you have heretofore so zealously and ably advocated. May your success be equal to your efforts, and may happiness and prosperity attend you through life.”

Reception at Madison*

IF, fellow-citizens, I can make myself heard by this numerous assembly, speaking, as I do, in the open air, I will return to you my heartfelt thanks for the kindness you have shown me. I come among you a stranger. On the day before yesterday I placed my foot, for the first time, on the soil of the great and growing State of Indiana. Although I have lived on terms of great intimacy and friendship with several Western gentlemen, members of Congress, among whom is your estimable townsman near me, (Governor Hendricks,) I have never before had an opportunity of seeing and forming an acquaintance for myself with my fellow-citizens of this section of the Union. I travel for this purpose. I confess that I regard with astonishment the evidences of intelligence, enterprise, and refinement everywhere exhibited around me, when I think of the short time that has elapsed since the spot where I stand was a howling wilderness. Since I entered public life, this State was unknown as a political government. All the country west of the Alleghanies and northwest of the Ohio constituted but one Territory, entitled to a single delegate in the counsels of the nation, having the right to speak, but not to vote. Since then, the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and the long strip of country known as the Territory of Wisconsin, have been carved out of it. Indiana, which numbers but twenty years since the commencement of her political existence, contains a population of six hundred thousand, equal to the population of Massachusetts, a State of two hundred years' duration. In age she is an infant; in strength and resources a giant. Her appearance indicates the

* A Speech delivered at Madison, in the State of Indiana, on the first of June 1837, on Occasion of a Public Reception by the Citizens of that Place.

full vigor of maturity, while, measured by her years, she is yet in the cradle.

Although I reside in a part of the country most remote from you, although I have seen you spring into existence and advance with rapid strides in the march of prosperity and power, until your population has equalled that of my own State, which you far surpass in fertility of soil and mildness of climate; yet these things have excited in me no feelings of dislike, or jealousy, or envy. On the contrary, I have witnessed them with pride and pleasure, when I saw in them the growth of a member of our common country; and with feelings warmer than pride, when I recollect that there are those among you who are bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, who inherit my name and share my blood. When they came to me for my advice, before leaving their hearths and homes, I did not oppose their desires or suggest difficulties in their paths. I told them, "Go and join your destinies with those of the hardy pioneers of the West, share their hardships, and partake their fortunes; go, and God speed you; only carry with you your own good principles, and whether the sun rises on you, or sets on you, let it warm American hearts in your bosoms."

Though, as I observed, I live in a part of the country most remote from you, fellow-citizens, I have been no inattentive observer of your history and progress. I have heard of the reports made in your legislature, and the acts passed in pursuance thereof. I have traced on the map of your State the routes marked out for extensive turnpikes, railroads, and canals. I have read with pleasure the acts providing for their establishment and completion. I do not pretend to offer you my advice; it would perhaps be presumptuous; but you will permit me to say, that, as far as I have examined them, they are conceived in wisdom, and evince great political skill and foresight. You have commenced at the right point. To open the means of communication, by which man may, when he wishes, see the face of his friend, should be the first work of every government. We may theorize and speculate about it as we please,—we may understand all the metaphysics of politics; but if men are confined to the narrow spot they inhabit, because they have not the means of travelling when they please, they must go back to a state of barbarism. Social intercourse is the corner-stone of

good government. The nation that provides no means for the improvement of its communications, has not taken the first step in civilization. Go on, then, as you have begun; prosecute your works with energy and perseverance; be not daunted by imaginary difficulties, be not deterred by exaggerated calculations of their cost. Go on; open your wilderness to the sun; turn up the soil; and in the wide-spread and highly-cultivated fields, the smiling villages, and the busy towns that will spring up from the bosom of the desert, you will reap a rich reward for your investment and industry.

Another of the paramount objects of government, to which I rejoice to see that you have turned your attention, is education. I speak not of college education, nor of academy education, though they are of great importance; I speak of free-school education, common-school education.

Among the luminaries in the sky of New England, the burning lights which throw intelligence and happiness on her people, the first and most brilliant is her system of common schools. I congratulate myself that my first speech on entering public life was in their behalf. Education, to accomplish the ends of good government, should be universally diffused. Open the doors of the school-house to all the children in the land. Let no man have the excuse of poverty for not educating his own offspring. Place the means of education within his reach, and if they remain in ignorance, be it his own reproach. If one object of the expenditure of your revenue be protection against crime, you could not devise a better or cheaper means of obtaining it. Other nations spend their money in providing means for its detection and punishment, but it is the principle of our government to provide for its never occurring. The one acts by *coercion*, the other by *prevention*. On the diffusion of education among the people rest the preservation and perpetuation of our free institutions. I apprehend no danger to our country from a foreign foe. The prospect of a war with any powerful nation is too remote to be a matter of calculation. Besides, there is no nation on earth powerful enough to accomplish our overthrow. Our destruction, should it come at all, will be from another quarter. From the inattention of the people to the concerns of their government, from their carelessness and negligence, I must confess that I do apprehend some danger. I fear

that they may place too implicit a confidence in their public servants, and fail properly to scrutinize their conduct; that in this way they may be made the dupes of designing men, and become the instruments of their own undoing. Make them intelligent, and they will be vigilant; give them the means of detecting the wrong, and they will apply the remedy.

The gentleman who has just addressed me in such flattering, but unmerited terms, has been pleased to make kind mention of my devotion to the Constitution, and my humble efforts in its support. I claim no merit on that account. It results from my sense of its surpassing excellences, which must strike every man who attentively and impartially examines it. I regard it as the work of the purest patriots and wisest statesmen that ever existed, aided by the smiles of a benignant Providence; for when we regard it as a system of government growing out of the discordant opinions and conflicting interests of thirteen independent States, it almost appears a Divine interposition in our behalf. I have always, with the utmost zeal and the moderate abilities I possess, striven to prevent its infraction in the slightest particular. I believed, if that bond of union were broken, we should never again be a united people. Where, among all the political thinkers, the constitution-makers and the constitution-menders of the day, could we find a man to make us another? Who would even venture to propose a reunion? Where would be the starting-point, and what the plan? I do not expect miracles to follow each other. No plan could be proposed that would be adopted; the hand that destroys the Constitution rends our Union asunder for ever.

My friend has been pleased to remember, in his address, my humble support of the constitutional right of Congress to improve the navigation of our great internal rivers, and to construct roads through the different States. It is well known that few persons entertain stronger opinions on this subject than myself. Believing that the great object of the Union is to secure the general safety and promote the general welfare, and that the Constitution was designed to point out the means of accomplishing these ends, I have always been in favor of such measures as I deemed for the general benefit, under the restrictions and limitations prescribed by the Constitution itself. I supported them with my voice, and my vote, not because they were

for the benefit of the West, but because they were for the benefit of the whole country. That they are local in their advantages, as well as in their construction, is an objection that has been and will be urged against every measure of the kind. In a country so widely extended as ours, so diversified in its interests and in the character of its people, it is impossible that the operation of any measure should affect all alike. Each has its own peculiar interest, whose advancement it seeks; we have the sea-coast, and you the noble river that flows at your feet. So it must ever be. Go to the smallest government in the world, the republic of San Marino, in Italy, possessing a territory of but ten miles square, and you will find its citizens, separated but by a few miles, having some interests which, on account of local situation, are separate and distinct. There is not on the face of the earth a plain, five miles in extent, whose inhabitants are all the same in their pursuits and pleasures. Some will live on a creek, others near a hill, which, when any measure is proposed for the general benefit, will give rise to jarring claims and opposing interests. In such cases, it has always appeared to me that the point to be examined was, whether the principle was general. If the principle were general, although the application might be partial, I cheerfully and zealously gave it my support. When an objection has been made to an appropriation for clearing the snags out of the Ohio River, I have answered it with the question, "Would you not vote for an appropriation to clear the Atlantic Ocean of snags, were the navigation of your coast thus obstructed? The people of the West contribute their portion of the revenue to fortify your sea-coast, and erect piers, and harbors, and light-houses, from which they derive a remote benefit, and why not contribute yours to improve the navigation of a river whose commerce enriches the whole country?"

It may be expected, fellow-citizens, that I should say something on a topic which agitates and distracts the public mind, I mean the deranged state of the currency, and the general stagnation of business. In giving my opinions on this topic, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I force them on no man. I am an independent man, speaking to independent men. I think for myself; you, of course, enjoy and exercise the same right. I cheerfully concede to every one the liberty of differing

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with me in sentiment, readily granting that he has as good a chance of being right as myself, perhaps a better. But I have some respect for my character as a public man. The present state of things has grown out of a series of measures, to which I have been in uniform opposition. In speaking of their consequences, I am doing but justice to myself in showing them in justification of my conduct. I am performing a duty to my fellow-citizens, who have a right to know the opinions of every public man. The present state of things is unparalleled in the annals of our country. The general suspension of specie payments by the banks, beginning I know not where, and ending I know not where, but comprehending the whole country, has produced wide-spread ruin and confusion through the land. To you the scene is one as yet of apprehension; to us, of deep distress. You cannot understand, my fellow-citizens, nor can I describe it so as to enable you to understand, the embarrassment and suffering which are depressing the spirit and crushing the energies of the people of the sea-girt States of the East. You are agriculturists, you produce what you consume, and always have the means of living within your reach. We depend on others for their agricultural productions; we live by manufactures and commerce, of which credit is the lifeblood. The destruction of credit is the destruction of our means of living. The man who cannot fulfil his daily engagements, or with whom others fail to fulfil theirs, must suffer for his daily bread. And who are those who suffer? Not the rich, for they can generally take care of themselves. Capital is ingenious and farsighted, ready in resources and fertile in expedients to shelter itself from impending storms. Shut it out from one source of increase, and it will find other avenues of profitable investment. It is the industrious, working part of the community, men whose hands have grown hard by holding the plough and pulling the oar, men who depend on their daily labor and their daily pay, who, when the operations of trade and commerce are checked and palsied, have no prospect for themselves and their families but beggary and starvation,—it is these who suffer. All this has been attributed to causes as different as can be imagined; over-trading, over-buying, over-selling, over-speculating, over-production, terms which I acknowledge I do not very well understand. I am at a loss to conceive how a nation can be-

come poor by over-production, producing more than she can sell or consume. I do not see where there has been over-trading, except in public lands; for when every thing else was up to such an enormous price, and the public land tied down to one dollar and a quarter an acre, who would not have bought it if he could?

These causes could not have produced all those consequences which have occasioned such general lamentation. They must have proceeded from some other source. And I now request you, my fellow-citizens, to bear witness, that here, in this good city, on the banks of the Ohio, on the first day of June, 1837, beneath the bright sun that is shining upon us, I declare my conscientious conviction that they have proceeded from the measures of the general government in relation to the currency. I make this declaration in no spirit of enmity to its authors; I follow no man with rebukes or reproaches. To reprobate the past will not alleviate the evils of the present. It is the duty of every good citizen to contribute his strength, however feeble, to diminish the burden under which a people groans. To apply the remedy successfully, however, we must first ascertain the causes, character, and extent of the evil.

Let us go back, then, to its origin. Forty-eight years have elapsed since the adoption of our Constitution. For forty years of that time we had a national bank. Its establishment originated in the imperious obligation imposed on every government to furnish its people with a circulating medium for their commerce. No matter how rich the citizen may be in flocks and herds, in houses and lands, if his government does not furnish him a medium of exchange, commerce must be confined to the petty barter suggested by mutual wants and necessities, as they exist in savage life. The history of all commercial countries shows that the precious metals can constitute but a small part of this circulating medium. The extension of commerce creates a system of credit; the transmission of money from one part of the country to the other gives birth to the business of exchange. To keep the value of this medium and the rates of exchange equal and certain, was imperiously required by the necessities of the times when the bank was established. Under the old confederacy, each of the thirteen States established and regulated its own money, which passed for its full value within

the State, and was useless the moment it crossed the State border. The little State of Rhode Island, for instance, (I hope no son of hers present will take offence at what I say,) so small that an Indiana man might almost cover her territory with his hand, was crowded with banks. A man might have been rich at Providence, but before he could travel to Boston, forty miles distant, he would starve for want of money to pay for his breakfast.

Had this state of things continued, some of the provisions of the Constitution would have been of no force or virtue. Of what value to Congress would have been the right to levy taxes, imposts, and duties, and to regulate commerce among different States, and of what effect or consequence the prohibition on the different States of levying and collecting imposts, if each and every one of them had possessed the right of paying her taxes and duties in a currency of her own, which would not pass one hundred miles, perhaps, from the bank whence it was issued? The creation of a national bank presented the surest means of remedying these evils, and accomplishing one of the principal objects of the Constitution, the establishment and maintenance of a currency whose value would be uniform in every part of the country. During the forty years it existed, under the two charters, we had no general suspension of specie payments, as at present. We got along well with it, and I am one of those who are disposed to let *well* alone. I am content to travel along the good old turnpike on which I have journeyed before with comfort and expedition, without turning aside to try a new track. I must confess that I do not possess that soaring self-respect, that lofty confidence in my own political sagacity and foresight, which would induce me to set aside the experience of forty years, and risk the ruin of the country for the sake of an *experiment*. To this is all the distress of the country attributable. This has caused such powerful invasions of bank paper, like sudden and succeeding flights of birds of prey and passage, and the rapid disappearance of specie at its approach. You all know that bank-notes have been almost as plenty as the leaves of the forest in the summer. But of what value are they to the holder, if he is compelled to pay his debts in specie? And who can be expected to pay his debts in this way, when the government has withdrawn the specie from circulation?

You have not yet felt the evil in its full extent. It is mostly in prospect, and you are watching its approach. While you are endeavoring to guard against it, strive to prevent its future recurrence. As you would hunt down, with hound and horn, the wolf who is making nightly havoc of your flocks and herds, pursue and keep down those who would make havoc in your business and property by experiments on our currency.

Although the country has bowed beneath the pressure, I do not fear that it will be broken down and prostrated in the dust. Depress them as it may, the energy and industry of the people will enable them to rise again. We have for a long time carried a load of bad government on our shoulders, and we are still able to bear up under it. But I do not see that, for that reason, we should be willing and eager to carry it. I do not see why it should prevent us from wishing to lessen it as much as possible, if not to throw it off altogether, when we know that we can get along so much easier and faster without it. While we are exerting ourselves with renewed industry and economy to recover from its blighting effects, while we plough the land and plough the sea, let us hasten the return of things to their proper state, by such political measures as will best accomplish the desired end. Let us inform our public servants of our wishes, and pursue such a course as will compel them to obey us.

In conclusion, my fellow-citizens, I return you my thanks for the patience and attention with which you have listened to me, and pray the beneficent Giver of all good, that he may keep you under the shadow of his wing, and continue to bless you with peace and prosperity.

Public Dinner in Faneuil Hall

Introductory Note

ON the return of Mr. Webster from the session in which he had particularly signalized himself by the delivery of his masterly speeches on the sub-treasury bill, and in reply to Mr. Calhoun (contained in a subsequent volume of this collection), a large number of his fellow-citizens of Boston could not be restrained from manifesting their sense of his extraordinary efforts, in exhibiting the true character of the odious sub-treasury project, and in procuring its ultimate rejection by Congress. He was accordingly invited to meet them at a public dinner, on the 24th of July, 1838. More than fifteen hundred persons attended it, every ticket having been eagerly taken as soon as issued. Every portion of the Hall, floor and galleries, was filled. The Governor of the Commonwealth (Hon. Edward Everett) presided at the table, and the spirit of the occasion and of the company may be gathered from the following remarks with which he introduced Mr. Webster to the assembly : —

“ And now, fellow-citizens,” said he, “ I rise to discharge the most pleasing part of my duty, which I fear you will think I have too long postponed ; the duty which devolves on me, as the organ of your feelings toward our distinguished guest, the senior Senator of the Commonwealth. And yet, fellow-citizens, I appeal to you, that I have approached this duty through the succession of ideas which most naturally conducts our minds and hearts to the grateful topic. I have proposed to you, Our country and its prosperity. Who among the great men, his contemporaries, has more widely surveyed and comprehended the various interests of all its parts ? I have proposed, The Union of the States. What public man is there living, whose political course has been more steadily consecrated to its perpetuity ? I have proposed to you, The Constitution. And who of our statesmen, from the time of its framers, has more profoundly investigated, more clearly expounded, more powerfully vindicated and sustained it ? But these topics I may pass over. They are matters which have been long familiar to you ; they need not any comment from me.

“ The events of the last year, and of the last session of Congress, and the present state of the country, invite our attention more particularly to

the recent efforts of our distinguished guest on the subject of *THE CURRENCY*. I know not but some persons may think that undue importance has been attached to the questions which have divided parties on this subject; that these questions are not so vital to liberty as they have been represented. But such an opinion would be erroneous. Undoubtedly there are countries, not free ones, in which money questions, as connected with the government, are of minor consequence. In China, in Turkey, in Persia, I presume they are very little discussed. In these countries the great question is, whether a man's head at night will be found in the same pleasing and convenient proximity to his shoulders that it was in the morning; and this is a kind of previous question, which, if decided against him, cuts off all others. Under those arbitrary governments of Europe, where the prince takes what he pleases, and when he pleases, it is of very little moment where he deposits it, on its way from the pockets of the people to his own. But it was remarked by Edmund Burke, more than seventy years ago, that in England, (and *a fortiori* in the United States, that is, under constitutional governments,) the great struggles for liberty had been almost always money questions, and on this ground he excused the Americans for the stand they took in opposition to a paltry tax. But, most certainly, the money question, as it has been agitated among us, is vastly more important, more intimately connected with constitutional liberty, than that which brought on the Revolution. The question with our fathers was one of a small tax; ours, of the entire currency. Theirs concerned three pence per pound on tea, illegally levied; ours, the entire currency illegally disposed of, the entire medium of circulation deranged, and for a period annihilated, the whole business of the country, in all its great branches, brought under the control of the treasury. The noble stand, therefore, taken by our distinguished Senator in this controversy has been upon points which concern the dearest interests of the people, and the elemental principles of the government.

"In fact, I know not that a policy can be imagined more at war with the true character of the government, than that which he has been called to combat. The past and present administrations, relying too confidently on the popular delusions which brought them into office, have systematically defeated one of the great original objects for which the Union was framed, that of a uniform medium of commerce. Nor has the manner of their policy been less objectionable than its design. They have crowded experiment upon experiment, with the fatal recklessness of the rash engineer who urges the fires in his furnaces till some noble steamer bursts in an awful explosion.* Our Senators and Representatives, and their associates, could they have forgotten that a revered Constitution and a beloved country were the chief victims, might well have folded their arms, and left the authors of the calamity to extricate themselves, as best they might, from the ruin. But not thus have they understood their duty; and we have seen them with admiration, in the last days of the session, gallantly putting out in the life-boat of the Constitution, with an eye of fire at the top, and an arm of iron at the helm, to

* The disaster of the Pulaski occurred about the time of the delivery of these remarks.

cruise about on the boiling waters, and pick up all that is left undestroyed. When I have seen the adherents of the administration rejecting, so far as they ventured, the salutary measures proposed or supported by our distinguished guest and his associates, for the restoration of the currency and the reestablishment of the public credit, and clinging to all that events have spared of their discredited measures, they have seemed to me to resemble the sun-stricken victims of a moody madness, who, instead of thankfully embracing the proffered relief, would prefer to float about on the weltering waters, clinging to the broken planks and the shivered splinters of their exploded policy, sure as they are, at the very best, if they reach solid ground, to do so beneath the overwhelming surge of popular indignation.

"I should take up a great deal more time than belongs to me, did I attempt even to sketch the distinguished services of our friend and guest in this constitutional warfare. They are impressed on your memories, and on your hearts. In the thickest of the conflict, his plume, like that of Henry the Fourth of France, discerned from afar, has pointed out the spot where, to use his own language, "the blows fall thickest and hardest"; and there he has been found, with the banner of the Union above his head, and the flaming cimetar of the Constitution in his hand. If the public mind has been thoroughly awakened to the inconsistency of the government policy with the genius of our institutions, if, to the experience we have all had of the pernicious operation of this policy, there has been added a clear understanding of the false principles, as well of constitutional law as of political economy, on which it rests, how much of this is not fairly to be ascribed to the efforts of our distinguished guest, efforts never stinted in or out of Congress, repeated in every form which can persuade the judgment or influence the conduct of men, never less than cogent, eloquent, irrefutable, but in the last session of Congress, perhaps more than ever before, grand, masterly, and overwhelming. It has indeed been a rare, I had almost said a sublime spectacle, to see him, unsupported by a majority in either house, opposed by the entire influence of the government, denounced by the administration press from one end of the Union to the other, yet carrying resolution after resolution against the administration, carrying them alike against the old guard and the new recruits, and, notwithstanding their abrupt and ill-compacted alliance, compelling them, in spite of themselves, to afford some relief to the country.

"These are the services, fellow-citizens, for which you this day tender your thanks to your distinguished guest. These are the services for which, Sir, on behalf of my fellow-citizens, I thank you; for which they thank you themselves. Behold, Sir, how they rise to pay you a manly homage.* The armies of Napoleon could not coerce it; the wealth of the Indies could not buy it; but it is freely, joyously paid, by fifteen hundred freemen, to the man of their affections. They thank you for having stood by them in these dark times,—at all times. They thank you, because they think they are beginning to feel the fruit of your exertions in the daily round of their pursuits. They ascribe it in

* The entire audience rose at this moment.

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no small degree to you, that the iron grasp of the government policy has been relaxed ; that its bolts and chains, relics of a barbarous age, have been shivered as soon as forged, and before they were riveted on the necks of the people. They thank you for having stood by the Constitution, in which their all of human hope for themselves and their children is enshrined. They thank you as one of themselves ; and because they know that your affections are with the people from which you sprung. They thank you because you have at all times shown, that, as the Whig blood of the Revolution circles in your veins, the Whig principles of the Revolution are imprinted on your heart. They thank you for the entire manliness of your course ; that you have never joined the treacherous cry of ‘ the hatred of the poor against the rich,’ — a cry raised by artful men, who think to flatter the people, while in reality they are waging war against the people’s business, the people’s prosperity, and the people’s Constitution. They are willing that this day’s offering should be remembered, when all this mighty multitude shall have passed from the stage. When that day shall have arrived, history will have written your name on one of her brightest pages ; fame will have encircled your bust with her greenest laurels ; but neither history nor fame will have paid you a truer, heartier tribute, than that which now, beneath the arches of this venerable hall, in the approving presence of these images of our canonized fathers, is tendered you by this great company of your fellow-citizens.

“ I give you, Gentlemen, —

“ DANIEL WEBSTER, — the statesman and the man ; whose name is engraven alike on the pillars of the Constitution and the hearts of his fellow-citizens. He is worthy of that place in the councils of the nation which he fills in the affections of the people.”

Mr. Webster then rose, amidst enthusiastic cheering, and addressed the meeting in the following speech.

Public Dinner in Faneuil Hall*

GENTLEMEN:— I shall be happy indeed, if the state of my health and the condition of my voice shall enable me to express, in a few words, my deep and heartfelt gratitude for this expression of your approbation. If public life has its cares and its trials, it has occasionally its consolations also. Among these, one of the greatest, and the chief, is the approbation of those whom we have honestly endeavored to serve. This cup of consolation you have now administered, — full, crowned, abundantly overflowing.

It is my chief desire at this time, in a few spontaneous and affectionate words, to render you the thanks of a grateful heart. When I lately received your invitation in New York, nothing was farther from my thoughts or expectations, than that I should meet such an assembly as I now behold in Boston.

But I was willing to believe that it was not meant merely as a compliment, which it was expected would be declined, but that it was in truth your wish, at the close of the labors of a long session of Congress, that I should meet you in this place, that we might mingle our mutual congratulations, and that we might enjoy together one happy, social hour.

The president of this assembly has spoken of the late session as having been not only long, but arduous; and, in some respects, it does deserve to be so regarded. I may indeed say, that, in an experience of twenty years of public life, I have never yet encountered labors or anxieties such as this session brought with it.

* Speech delivered at a Public Dinner in Faneuil Hall, given by the Citizens of Boston to Mr. Webster, at the Close of the Session of Congress, on the 24th of July, 1838.

With a short intermission in the autumn, so short as not to allow the more distant members to visit their homes, we have been in continual session from the early part of September to the 9th of July, a period of ten months.* On our part, during this whole time, we have been contending in minorities against majorities; majorities, indeed, not to be relied on for all measures, as the event has proved, but still acknowledged and avowed majorities, professing general attachment and support to the measures, and to the men, of the administration. My own object, and that of those with whom I have had the honor to act, has been steady and uniform. That object was, to resist new theories, new schemes, new and dangerous projects, until time could be gained for their consideration by the people. This was our great purpose, and its accomplishment required no slight effort. It was the commencement of a new Congress. The organization of the two houses showed clear and decisive administration majorities. The administration itself was new, and had come into its fresh power with something of the popularity of that which preceded it. It was no child's play, therefore, to resist, successfully, its leading measures, for so long a period as should allow time for an effectual appeal to the people, pressed, as those measures were, with the utmost zeal and assiduity.

The president of the day has alluded in a very flattering manner to my own exertions and efforts, made at different times, in connection with the leading topics. But I claim no particular merit for myself. In what I have done, I have only acted with others. I have acted, especially, with my most estimable, able, and excellent colleague,† and with the experienced and distinguished men who form the delegation of Massachusetts in the House of Representatives, a delegation of which any State might be justly proud. We have acted together, as men holding, in almost all cases, common opinions, and laboring for a common end. It gives me great pleasure to have the honor of seeing so many of the Representatives of the State in Congress here to-day; but I must not be prevented, even by their presence, from bearing my humble but hearty testimony to the

* An extra session of Congress had been called by President Van Buren, in September, 1837, in consequence of the general suspension of specie payments by the banks.

† Hon. John Davis.

fidelity and ability with which they have, in this arduous struggle, performed their public duties. The crisis has, indeed, demanded the efforts of all; and we of Massachusetts, while we hope we have done our duty, have done it only in concurrence with other Whigs, whose zeal, ability, and exertions can never be too much commended.

This is not an occasion in which it is fit or practicable to discuss very minutely, and at length, the questions which have been chiefly agitated during this long and laborious session of Congress. Yet, so important is the great and general question, which, for the last twelve or fifteen months, has been presented to the consideration of the legislature, that I deem it proper, on this, as on all occasions, to state, at the risk of some repetition, perhaps, what is the nature of that important question, and briefly to advert to some of the circumstances in which it had its origin.

Whatever subordinate questions may have been raised touching a sub-treasury, or a constitutional treasury, or a treasury in one, or in another, or in yet a third form, I take the question, the plain, the paramount, the practical question, to be this; namely, whether it be among the powers and the duties of Congress to take any further care of the national currency than to regulate the coinage of gold and silver. That question lies at the foundation of all. Other questions, however multiplied or varied, have but grown out of that.

If government is bound to take care that there is a good currency for all the country, then, of course, it will have a good currency for itself, and need take no especial pains to provide for itself any thing peculiar. But if, on the other hand, government is at liberty to abandon the general currency to its fate, without concern and without remorse, then, from necessity, it must take care of itself; amidst the general wreck of currency and credit, it must have places of resort and a system of shelter; it must have a currency of its own, and modes of payment and disbursement peculiar to itself. It must burrow and hide itself in sub-treasury vaults. Scorning credit, and having trust in nobody, it must grasp metallic money, and act as if nothing represented, or could represent, property, which could not be counted, paid piece by piece, or weighed in the scales, and made to ring upon the table; or it must resort to special deposits in banks,

even in those banks whose conduct has been so loudly denounced as flagitious and criminal, treacherous to the government, and fraudulent towards the people. All these schemes and contrivances are but the consequences of the general doctrine which the administration has advanced, and attempted to recommend to the country; that is, that Congress has nothing to do with the currency, beyond the mere matter of coinage, except to provide for itself. How such a notion should come to be entertained, at this day, may well be a matter of wonder for the wise; since it is a truth capable of the clearest demonstration, that, from the first day of the existence of the Constitution, from the moment when a practical administration of government drew a first breath under its provisions, the superintendence and care over the currency of the country have been admitted to be among the clear and unquestioned powers and duties of Congress. This was the opinion in Washington's time, and his administration acted upon it, vigorously and successfully. And in Mr. Madison's time, when the peculiar circumstances of the country again brought up the subject, and gave it new importance, it was held to be the exclusive, or at least the paramount and unquestioned, right of Congress to take care of the currency; to restore it when depreciated; to see that there was a sound, convertible paper circulation, suited to the circumstances of the country, and having equal value, and the same credit, in all parts of it. This was Mr. Madison's judgment. He acted upon it; and both houses of Congress concurred with him. But if we now quote Mr. Madison's sentiments, we get no reply at all from the friends of the government system. We may read his messages of 1815 and 1816 as often as we please. No man answers them, and yet the party of the administration, professing to belong to Mr. Madison's political school, acts upon directly opposite principles.

Now, what has brought about this state of things? What has caused this attempt, now made, at the end of half a century, to change a great principle of administration, and to surrender a most important power of the government? Gentlemen, it has been a crisis of party, not of the country, which has given birth to these new sentiments. The tortuous windings of party policy have conducted us, and nothing else could well have conducted us, to such a point. Nothing but party pledges, nothing

but courses of political conduct entered upon for party purposes, and pursued from necessary regard to personal and party consistency, could so far have pushed the government out of its clear and well-trodden path of constitutional duty. From General Washington's presidency to the last hour of the late President's, both the government and the country have supposed Congress to be clothed with the general duty of protecting the currency, either as an inference from the coinage power or from the obvious and incontestable truth, that the regulation of the currency is naturally and plainly a branch of the commercial power. General Jackson himself was behind no one of his predecessors in asserting this power, and in acknowledging the corresponding duty. We all know that his very first complaint against the late Bank of the United States was, that it had not fulfilled the expectation of the country, by furnishing for the use of the people a sound and uniform currency. There were many persons, certainly, who did not agree with him in his opinions respecting the bank and the effects of its agency on the country; but it was expressly on the ground of this alleged failure of the bank, that he undertook what was called the great reform. There are those, again, who think that of this attempted reform he made a very poor and sorry business; but still the truth is, that he undertook this reform for the very purpose professed and avowed, that he might fulfil better than it had yet been fulfilled the duty of government in furnishing the people with a good currency. The President thought that the currency, in 1832 and 1833, was not good enough; that the people had a right to expect a better; and to meet this expectation, he began what he himself called his experiment. He said the currency was not so sound, and so uniform, as it was the duty of government to make it; and he therefore undertook to give us a currency more sound and more uniform. And now, Gentlemen, let us recur shortly to what followed; for there we shall find the origin of the present constitutional notions and dogmas. Let us see what has changed the Constitution in this particular.

In 1833, the public deposits were removed, by an act of the President himself, from the Bank of the United States, and placed in certain State banks, under regulations prescribed by the executive alone. This was the experiment. The utmost confidence, indeed, an arrogant and intolerant confidence, was

entertained and expressed of its success; and all who doubted were regarded as blind bigots to a national bank. When the experiment was put into operation, it was proclaimed that its success was found to be complete. Down to the very close of General Jackson's administration, we heard of nothing but the wonderful success of the experiment. It was declared, from the highest official sources, that the State banks, used as banks of deposit, had not only shown themselves perfectly competent to fulfil the duties of fiscal agents to government, but also that they had sustained the currency, and facilitated the great business of internal exchanges, with the most singular and gratifying success, and better than the same thing had been done before. In all this glow and fervor of self-commendation, the late administration went out of office, having bequeathed the experiment, with all its blushing honors and rising glories, to its successor. But a frost, a nipping frost, was at hand. Two months after General Jackson had retired, the banks suspended specie payments, deposit banks and all; a universal embarrassment smote down the business and industry of the country; the treasury was left without a dollar, and the brilliant glory of the experiment disappeared in gloom and thick darkness! And now, Gentlemen, came the change of sentiments, now came the new reading of the Constitution. A national bank had already been declared by the party to be unconstitutional, the State bank system had failed, and what more could be done? What other plan was to be devised? How could the duty of government over the currency be now performed? The administration had decried a national bank, and it now felt bound to denounce all State institutions; and what, therefore, could it do? The whole party had laid out its entire strength, in an effort to render the late Bank of the United States, and any bank of the United States, unpopular and odious. It had pronounced all such institutions to be dangerous, anti-republican, and monarchical. It had, especially, declared a national bank to be plainly and clearly unconstitutional. Now, Gentlemen, I have nothing to say of the diffidence and modesty of men, who, without hesitation or blushing, set up their own favorite opinions on a question of this kind against the judgment of the government and the judgment of the country, maintained for fifty years. I will only remark, that, if we were to find men act-

ing thus in their own affairs, if we should find them disposing of their own interests, or making arrangements for their own property, in contempt of rules which they knew the legislative and the judicial authorities had all sanctioned for half a century, we should be very likely to think them out of their heads. Yet this ground had been taken against the late bank, and against all national banks; and it could not be surrendered without apparent and gross inconsistency. What, then, I ask again, was the administration to do? You may say, it should have retracted its error, it should have seen the necessity of a national institution, and yielded to the general judgment of the country.

But that would have required an effort of candor and magnanimity, of which all men are not capable. Besides, there were open, solemn, public pledges in the way. This commitment of the party against a national bank, and the disastrous results of its experiment on the State institutions, brought the party into a difficulty, from which it seemed to have no escape, but in shifting off, altogether, the duty of taking care of the currency. I was at Wheeling, in Virginia, in May of last year, when the banks suspended payment; and, at the risk of some imputation of bad taste, I will refer to observations of mine made then, to the citizens of that town, and published, in regard to the questions which that event would necessarily bring before the country.* I saw at once that we were at the commencement of a new era, and that a controversy must arise, which would greatly excite the community.

No sooner had the State banks suspended specie payments, and among the rest those which were depositories of the government, than a cry of fraud and treachery was raised against them, with no better reason, perhaps, than existed for that loud, and boisterous, and boastful confidence, with which the late administration had spoken of their capacity of usefulness, and had assured the country that its experiment could not fail. But whether the suspension by the banks was a matter of necessity with them, or not, the administration, after it had happened, seeing itself now shut out from the use of all banks by its own declared opinions and the results of its own policy, and seeing

* See the Speech above, page 233

no means at hand for making another attempt at reforming the currency, turned a short corner, and in all due form denied that the government had any duty of the kind to discharge. From the time of the veto of the bank charter, in 1832, the administration had been like a man who had voluntarily deserted a safe bottom, on deep waters, and, having in vain sought to support himself by laying hold on one and another piece of floating timber, chooses rather to go down than to seek safety in returning to what he has abandoned.

Seeing that it had deprived itself of the common means of regulating the currency, it now denied its obligation to do so; declared it had nothing to do with the currency beyond coinage; that it would take care of the revenues of the government, and as for the rest, the people must look out for themselves. This decision thus evidently grew out of party necessity. Having deprived themselves of the ordinary and constitutional means of performing their duty, they sought to avoid the responsibility by declaring that there was no such duty to perform. They have looked further into the Constitution, and examined it by daylight and by moonlight, and cannot find any such duty or obligation. Though General Jackson saw it very plainly, during the whole course of his presidency, it has now vanished, and the new commentators can nowhere discern a vestige of it. The present administration, indeed, stood pledged to tread in the steps of its predecessor; but here was one footprint which it could not, or would not, occupy, or one stride too long for it to take. The message, I had almost said the fatal message, communicated to Congress in September, contained a formal disavowal, by the administration, of all power under the Constitution to regulate the general actual currency of the country.

The President says, in that message, that if he refrains from suggesting to Congress any specific plan for regulating the exchanges, relieving mercantile embarrassments, or interfering with the ordinary operations of foreign or domestic commerce, it is from the conviction that such measures are not within the constitutional provision of government.

How all this could be said, when the Constitution expressly gives to Congress the power to regulate commerce, both foreign and domestic, I cannot conceive. But the Constitution was not to be trifled with, and the people are not to be trifled

with. The country, I believe, by a great majority, is of opinion that this duty *does belong* to government, and ought to be exercised. All the new expounders have not been able to erase this general power over commerce, and all that belongs to commerce. Their fate, in this respect, is like that of him in ancient story. While endeavoring to tear up and rend asunder the Constitution, its strong fibres have recoiled, and caught them in the cleft. They experience

“Milo’s fearful end,
Wegged in the timber which they strove to rend.”

Gentlemen, this constitutional power can never be surrendered. We may as well give up the whole commercial power at once, and throw every thing connected with it back upon the States. If Congress surrender the power, to whom shall it pass, or where shall it be lodged? Shall it be left to six-and-twenty different legislatures? To eight hundred or a thousand unconnected State banks? No, Gentlemen, to allow that authority to be surrendered would be to abandon the vessel of state, without pilot or helm, and to suffer her to roll, darkling, down the current of her fate.

For the sake of avoiding all misapprehensions on this most important subject, I wish to state my own opinion, clearly, and in few words. I have never said, that it is an indispensable duty in Congress, under all circumstances, to establish a national bank. No such duty, certainly, is created by the Constitution, in express terms. I did not say *what particular measures* are enjoined by the Constitution, in this respect. Congress has its discretion, and is left to its own judgment, as to the means most proper to be employed. But I say the general duty does exist.

I maintain that Congress is bound to take care, by some proper means, to secure a good currency for the people; and that, while this duty remains unperformed, one great object of the Constitution is not attained. If we are to have as many different currencies as there are States, and these currencies are to be liable to perpetual fluctuation, it would be folly to say that we had reached that security and uniformity in commercial regulation, which we know it was the purpose of the Constitution to establish.

The banks may all resume specie payments to-morrow,—I hope they will; but how much will this resumption accomplish? It will doubtless afford good local currencies; but will it give the country any proper and safe paper currency, of equal and universal value? Certainly it cannot, and will not. Will it bring back, for any length of time, exchanges to the state they were in when there was a national currency in existence? Certainly, in my opinion, it will not. We may heap gold bags upon gold bags, we may create what securities, in the constitution of local banks, we please, but we cannot give to any such bank a character that shall insure the receipt of its notes, with equal readiness, everywhere throughout the valley of the Mississippi, and from the shores of the Gulf of Mexico to the St. Lawrence. Nothing can accomplish this, but an institution which is national in its character. The people desire to see, in their currency, the marks of this nationality. They like to see the spread eagle, and where they see that they have confidence.

Who, if he will look at the present state of things, is not wise enough to see that there is much and deep cause for fear in regard to the future, unless the government will take the subject of currency under its own control, as it ought to do. For one, I think I see trouble ahead, and I look for effectual prevention and remedy only to a just exercise of the powers of Congress. I look not without apprehension upon the creation of numerous and powerful State institutions, full of competition and rivalry, and under no common control. I look for other and often-repeated expansions of paper circulation, inflations of trade, and general excess; and then, again, for other violent ebbings of the swollen flood, ending in other suspensions. I see no steadiness, no security, till the government of the United States shall fulfil its constitutional duty. I shall be disappointed, certainly, if, for any length of time, the benefits of a sound and uniform convertible paper currency can be enjoyed, while the whole subject is left to six-and-twenty States, and to eight hundred local banks, all anxious for the use of money and the use of credit in the highest degree.

As I have already said, these sub-treasury schemes are but contrivances for getting away from a disagreeable duty. And, after all, there are scarcely any two of the friends of the admin-

istration who can agree upon the same sub-treasury scheme. Each has a plan of his own. One man requires that all banks shall be discarded, and nothing but gold and silver shall be received for revenue. Another will exclaim, "That won't do; that's not my thunder." Another would prohibit all the small notes, and another would banish all the large ones. Another is for a special deposit scheme; for making the banks sub-treasuries and depositories; for making sub-treasuries of the broken, rotten, treacherous banks; for taking bank-notes, tying them up with red strings, depositing them in the vaults, and paying them out again.

It has been the proposition of the administration to separate the money of the government from the money of the people; to secure a good medium of payments, for the use of the treasury, in collecting and disbursing revenue, and to take no care of the general circulation of the country. This is the sum of its policy. Looking upon this whole scheme but as an abandonment of clear constitutional obligation, I have opposed it, in every form in which it has been presented. My object, as I have already said, and that of those with whom I acted, has been, to prevent the sanction of all or any of these new projects, by authority of law, until another Congress should be elected, which might express the will of the people formed after the present state of things arose. In this object we have succeeded. If we have done little positive good, we have at least prevented the introduction and establishment of new theories and new contrivances, and we have preserved the Constitution, in this respect, entire. No surrender or abandonment of important powers is, as yet, indorsed on the parchment of that instrument. No new clause is appended to it, making its provisions a mere *non obstante* to executive discretion. It has been snatched from the furnace. From this furnace of party contention, heated seven times hotter than it has been wont to be heated, the Constitution has been rescued, and we may hold it up to the people this day, and tell them that even the smell of the fire is not upon it.

But now, Gentlemen, a stronger arm must be put forth. A mightier guardianship must now interfere. Time has been gained for public discussion and consideration, and the great result is now with the people. That they will ultimately decide right, I have the fullest confidence. Party attachment and party

patronage, it is true, may do much to delay the results of general opinion, but they cannot long resist the convictions of a whole people. It is most certain that, up to the present hour, this new policy has been most unfavorably received. State after State has fallen off from the ranks of the administration, on account of its promulgation, and of the persevering attempt to raise upon it a system of legal, practical administration. The message of September completed the list of causes necessary to produce a popular revolution in sentiment in Maine, Ohio, New Jersey, and New York. Since the proposition was renewed, at the late session, we have witnessed a similar revolution in Connecticut and Louisiana, and very important changes, perhaps equivalent to revolutions, in the strength of parties in other States. There is little reason to doubt, if all the electors of the country could be polled to-day, that a great and decisive majority would be found against all this strange policy. Yet, Gentlemen, I do not consider the question, by any means, as decided. The policy is not abandoned. It is to be persisted in. Its friends look for a reaction in public opinion. I think I understand their hopes and expectations. They rely on this *reaction*. Every thing is to be accomplished by *reaction*. A month ago, this reaction was looked for to show itself in Louisiana. Altogether disappointed in that quarter, the friends of the policy now stretch their hopes to the other extremity of the Union, and look for it in Maine. In my opinion, Gentlemen, there can be no reaction which can reconcile the people of this country to the policy at present pursued.

There must, in my opinion, be a change. If the administration will not change its course, it must be changed itself. But I repeat, that the decision now lies with the people; and in that decision, when it shall be fairly pronounced, I shall cheerfully acquiesce. We ought to address ourselves, on this great and vital question, to the whole people, to the candid and intelligent of all parties. We should exhibit its magnitude, its essential consequence to the Constitution, and its infinite superiority to all ordinary strifes of party. We may well and truly say, that it is a new question; that the great mass of the people, of any party, is not committed on it; and it is our duty to invoke all true patriots, all who wish for the well-being of the government and the country, to resist these experiments upon the Constitu-

tion, and this wild and strange departure from our hitherto approved and successful policy.

At the same time, Gentlemen, while we thus invoke aid from all quarters, we must not suffer ourselves to be deceived. We must yield to no expedients, to no schemes and projects unknown to the Constitution, and alien to our own history and our habits. We are to be saved, if saved at all, *in* the Constitution, not *out* of it. None can aid us, none can aid the country, by any thing in the nature of mere political project, nor can any *devices* supply the place of regular constitutional administration. It was to prevent, or to remedy, such a state of things as now exists, that the Constitution was formed and adopted. The time when there is a disordered currency, and a distracted commerce, is the very time when its agency is required; and I hope those who wish for a restoration of general prosperity will look steadily to the light which the Constitution sheds on the path of duty.

As to you and me, fellow-citizens, our course is not doubtful. However others may decide, we hold on to the Constitution, and to all its powers, as they have been authentically expounded, and practically and successfully experienced, for a long period. Our interests, our habits, our affections, all bind us to the principles of our Union as our leading and guiding star.

Gentlemen, I cannot resume my seat without again expressing my sense of gratitude for your generous appreciation of my services. I have the pleasure to know that this festival originated with the Boston mechanics, a body always distinguished, always honored, always patriotic, from the first dawn of the Revolution to the present time. Who is here, whose father has not told him — there are some here old enough to know it themselves — that they were Boston mechanics whose blood reddened State Street on the memorable 5th of March. And as the tendencies of the Revolution went forward, and times grew more and more critical, it was the Boston mechanics who composed, to a great extent, the crowds which frequented the old Whig head-quarters in Union Street; which assembled, as occasion required patriots to come together, in the Old South; or filled to suffocation this immortal Cradle of American Liberty.

When Independence was achieved, their course was alike in-

telligent, wise, and patriotic. They saw, as quick and as fully as any men in the country, the infirmities of the old Confederation, and discerned the means by which they might be remedied. From the first, they were ardent and zealous friends of the present Constitution. They saw the necessity of united councils, and common regulations, for all the States, in matters of trade and commerce. They saw, what indeed is obvious enough, that their interest was completely involved with that of the mercantile class, and other classes; and that nothing but one general, uniform system of commerce, trade, and imports could possibly give to the business and industry of the country vigor and prosperity. When the convention for acting on the Constitution sat in this city, and the result of its deliberations was doubtful, the mechanics assembled at the Green Dragon tavern, and passed the most firm and spirited resolutions in favor of the Constitution; and when these resolutions were presented to the Boston delegation, by a committee of which Colonel Revere was chairman, they were asked by one of the members, how many mechanics were at the meeting; to which Colonel Revere answered, "More than there are stars in heaven." With statesmanlike sagacity, they foresaw the advantages of a united government. They celebrated, therefore, the adoption of the Constitution by rejoicings and festivals, such, perhaps, as have not since been witnessed. Emblematic representations, long processions of all the trades, and whatever else might contribute to the joyous demonstration of gratified patriotism, distinguished the occasion. Gentlemen, I can say with great truth, that an occasion intended to manifest respect to me could have originated nowhere with more satisfaction to myself than with the mechanics of Boston.

I am bound to make my acknowledgments to other classes of citizens who assemble here to join with the mechanics in the purpose of this meeting. I see with pleasure the successors and followers of the Mathers, of Clarke, and of Cooper; and I am gratified, also, by the presence of those of my own profession, in whose immediate presence and society so great a portion of my life has been passed. It is natural that I should value highly this proof of their regard. We have walked the same paths, we have listened to the same oracles, we have been guided together by the lights of Dana, and Parsons, and Sewall,

and Parker, not to mention living names, not unknown or unhonored either at home or abroad. As I honor the profession, so I honor and respect its worthy members, as defenders of truth, as supporters of law and liberty, as men who ever act on steady principles of honor and justice, and from whom no one, with a right cause, is turned away, though he may come clothed in rags.

Mingling in this vast assembly, I perceive, Gentlemen, many citizens who bear an appellation which is honored, and which deserves to be honored, wherever a spirit of enlightened liberality, humanity, and charity finds regard and approbation among men, I mean the appellation of Boston merchants. In a succession of generations, they have contributed uniformly to great objects of public interest and advantage. They have founded institutions of learning, of piety, and of charity. They have explored the field of human misfortune and calamity; they have sought out the causes of vice, and want, and ignorance, and have sought them only that they might be removed and extirpated. They have poured out like water the wealth acquired by their industry and honorable enterprise, to relieve the necessities of poverty, administer comfort to the wretched, soothe the ravings of distressed insanity, open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, and shed the light of knowledge, and the reforming influences of religion where ignorance and crime have abounded. How am I to commend, not only single acts of benevolence, but whole lives of benevolence, such as this? May He reward them, — may that Almighty Being reward them, in whose irreversible judgment, in that day which is to come, the merit even of the widow's mite shall outweigh the advantages of all the pomp and grandeur of the world!

Gentlemen, citizens of Boston, I have been in the midst of you for twenty years. It is nearly sixteen years since, quite unexpectedly to myself, you saw fit to require public service at my hands and to place me in the national legislature. If, in that long period, you have found in my public conduct something to be approved, and more to be forgiven than to be reprehended, and if we meet here to-day better friends for so many years of acquaintance and mutual confidence, I may well esteem myself happy in the enjoyment of a high reward.

I offer you again, fellow-citizens, my grateful acknowledg-

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ments, and all my sincere and cordial good wishes; and I propose to you as a toast:—

“ The City of Boston: May it continue to be the head-quarters of good principles, till the blood of the Revolutionary patriots shall have run through a thousand generations!”

Royal Agricultural Society

Royal Agricultural Society*

IN the spring of 1839, Mr. Webster went for a short time to England. He went in no public capacity, but his reputation had preceded him, and he was received with every mark of the most distinguished consideration. He was present at several public festivals, and his addresses appear to have made a deep impression on those who heard them. The following is the only one, however, which was reported at any length. It was delivered at the first Triennial Celebration of the Royal Agricultural Society, held at Oxford, on the 18th of July. Three thousand persons were at table. Earl Spencer presided, and, in introducing Mr. Webster, said they had "already drunk the health of a foreign minister who was present, but they had the honor and advantage of having among them other foreigners, not employed in any public capacity, who had come among them for the purpose of seeing a meeting of English farmers, such as he believed never had been witnessed before, but which he hoped might often be seen again. Among these foreigners was one gentleman, of a most distinguished character, from the United States of America, that great country, whose people we were obliged legally to call foreigners, but who were still our brethren in blood. It was most gratifying to him that such a man was present at that meeting, that he might know what the farmers of England really were, and be able to report to his fellow-citizens the manner in which they were united, from every class, in promoting their peaceful and most important objects." He gave, —

"The health of Mr. Webster, and other distinguished strangers."

The toast was received with much applause.

MR. WEBSTER said the notice which the noble Earl at the head of the table had been kind enough to take of him, and the friendly sentiments which he had seen fit to express towards the coun-

* Address at the Triennial Celebration of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, at Oxford, on the 18th of July, 1839.

try to which he belonged, demanded his most cordial acknowledgments. He should therefore begin by saying how much he was gratified in having it in his power to pass one day among the proprietors, the cultivators, the farmers, of Old England; that England of which he had been reading and conversing all his life, and now for once had the pleasure of visiting.

I would say, in the next place, continued Mr. Webster, if I could say, how much I have been pleased and gratified with one portion of the exhibition for which we are indebted to the formation of the Royal Agricultural Society, and that is, the assemblage of so large a number of the farmers of England. When persons connected with some pursuit, of whatever description, assemble in such numbers, I cannot look on them but with respect and regard; but I freely confess that I am more than ordinarily moved on all such occasions, when I see before me, on either continent, a great assemblage of those whose interests, whose hopes, whose objects and pursuits in life, are connected with the cultivation of the soil.

Whatever else may tend to enrich and beautify society, that which feeds and clothes comfortably the great mass of mankind should always be regarded as the great foundation of national prosperity. I need not say that the agriculture of England is instructive to all the world; as a science, it is here better understood; as an art, it is here better practised; as a great interest, it is here as highly esteemed as in any other part of the globe.

The importance of agriculture to a nation is obvious to every man; but it, perhaps, does not strike every mind so suddenly, although certainly it is equally true, that the annual produce of English agriculture is a great concern to the whole civilized world. The civilized and commercial states are so connected, their interests are so blended, that it is a matter of notoriety, that the fear or the prospect of a short crop in England deranges and agitates the business transactions and commercial speculations of the whole trading world.

It is natural that this should be the case in those nations which look to the occurrence of a short crop in England as an occasion which may enable them to dispose profitably of their own surplus produce. But the fact goes much farther, for when such an event occurs in the English capital, — the cen-

tre of commercial speculations, where the price of commodities is settled and arranged for the whole world, where the exchanges between nations are conducted and concluded,—its consequences are felt everywhere, as no one knows better than the noble Earl who occupies the chair. Should there be a frost in England fifteen days later than usual in the spring, should there be an unseasonable drought, or ten cold and wet days, instead of ten warm and dry ones, when the harvest is reaped, every exchange in Europe and America is more or less affected by the result.

I will not pursue these remarks. [Loud cries of “Go on! Go on!”] I must, however, say, that I entertain not the slightest doubt of the great advantage to the interest of agriculture which must result from the formation and operation of this society. Is it not obvious to the most common observer, that those who cultivate the soil have not the same conveniences, opportunities, and facilities of daily intercourse and comparison of opinions, as the commercial and manufacturing interests? Those who are associated in the pursuits of commerce and manufactures naturally congregate together in cities; they have immediate means of frequent communication. Their sympathies, feelings, and opinions are instantaneously circulated, like electricity, through the whole body.

But how is it with the cultivators of the soil? Separated, spread over a thousand fields, each attentive to his own acres, they have only occasional opportunities of communicating with each other. If among commercial men chambers of commerce, and other institutions of that character,—if among the trades guilds are found expedient, how much more necessary and advisable to have some such institutions as this society, which, at least annually, shall bring together the representatives of the great agricultural interest!

In many parts of the country to which I belong, there are societies upon a similar principle, which have been found very advantageous. As with you, they offer rewards for specimens of fine animals, and for implements of husbandry supposed to excel those which have been known before. They turn their attention to every thing designed to facilitate the operations of the farmer, and improve his stock, and interest in the country. Among other means of improving agriculture, they

have imported largely from the best breeds of animals known in England. I am sure that a gentleman who has to-day deservedly obtained many prizes for stock will not be displeased to learn that I have seen, along the rich pastures of the Ohio and its tributary streams, animals raised from those which had been furnished by his farms in Yorkshire and Northumberland.

But, apart from this subject, I beg leave to make a short response to the very kind sentiments, which went near to my heart, as uttered by the noble Earl at the head of the table.

The noble chairman was pleased to speak of the people of the United States as kindred in blood with the people of England. I am an American. I was born on that great continent, and I am wedded to the fortunes of my country, for weal or for woe. There is no other region of the earth which I can call my country. But I know, and I am proud to know, what blood flows in these veins.

I am happy to stand here to-day, and to remember, that, although my ancestors, for several generations, lie buried beneath the soil of the western continent, yet there has been a time when my ancestors and your ancestors toiled in the same cities and villages, cultivated adjacent fields, and worked together to build up that great structure of civil polity which has made England what England is.

When I was about to embark for this country, some friends asked me what I was going to England for. To be sure, Gentlemen, I came for no object of business, public or private; but I told them I was coming to see the elder branch of the family. I told them I was coming to see my distant relations, my kith and kin of the old Saxon race.

With regard to whatsoever is important to the peace of the world, its prosperity, the progress of knowledge and of just opinions, the diffusion of the sacred light of Christianity, I know nothing more important to the promotion of those best interests of humanity, and the cause of the general peace, amity, and concord, than the good feeling subsisting between the Englishmen on this side of the Atlantic, and the descendants of Englishmen on the other.

Some little clouds have overhung our horizon, — I trust they will soon pass away. I am sure that the age we live in does not expect that England and America are to have controversies

carried to the extreme, upon any occasion not of the last importance to national interests and honor.

We live in an age when nations, as well as individuals, are subject to a moral responsibility. Neither governments nor people — thank God for it! — can now trifle with the general sense of the civilized world; and I am sure that the civilized world would hold your country and my country to a very strict account, if, without very plain and apparent reason, deeply affecting the independence and great interests of the nation, any controversy between them should have other than an amicable issue.

I will venture to say that each country has intelligence enough to understand all that belongs to its just rights, and is not deficient in means to maintain them; and if any controversy between England and America were to be pushed to the extreme of force, neither party would or could have any signal advantage over the other, except what it could find in the justice of its cause and the approbation of the world.

With respect to the occasion which has called us together, I beg to repeat the gratification which I have felt in passing a day in such a company, and to conclude with the most fervent expression of my wish for the prosperity and usefulness of the Agricultural Society of England.

The Agriculture of England

The Agriculture of England*

MR. WEBSTER has at all periods of life cherished a strong attachment to agricultural pursuits. Of late years, when not obliged to be at Washington, in the discharge of his public duties, he has resided wholly on his farm at Marshfield, Massachusetts. The condition of the agriculture of England was one of the objects which most received his attention, during his short visit to that country in 1839. On his return to the United States in January, 1840, a strong desire was entertained by his friends to meet him on some public occasion, and a wish was expressed, particularly by many members of the Legislature of Massachusetts, who were in the habit of holding occasional meetings for the discussion of agricultural subjects, to learn the result of his observations on the present state of English agriculture. These wishes were communicated to Mr. Webster, and an early day was appointed for a meeting, at which the following remarks were made by him.

MR. CHAIRMAN, I would observe in the outset of these remarks, that I regard agriculture as the leading interest of society; and as having, in all its relations, a direct and intimate bearing upon human comfort and the national prosperity. I have been familiar with its operations in my youth; and I have always looked upon the subject with a lively and deep interest. I do not esteem myself to be particularly qualified to judge of the subject in all its various aspects and departments; and I neither myself regard, nor would I have others regard, my opinions as authoritative. But the subject has been one of careful observation to me, both in public and private life; and my visit to Europe, at a season of the year particularly favorable for this purpose, has given me the opportunity of seeing

* Remarks on the Agriculture of England, made at a Meeting of the Legislature of Massachusetts, and others interested in Agriculture, held at the State-House in Boston, on the Evening of the 13th of January, 1840.

its improved husbandry, and as far as it may be interesting, or can have a bearing upon the subject of the evening's discussion, the agriculture of Massachusetts, I will, as the meeting appear to expect, say a few words upon what has attracted my notice.

How far, in a question of this kind, the example of other countries is to be followed, is an inquiry worthy of much consideration. The example of a foreign country may be too closely followed. It will furnish a safe rule of imitation only as far as the circumstances of the one country correspond with those of the other.

The great objects of agriculture, and the great agricultural products of England and of Massachusetts, are much the same. Neither country produces olives, nor rice, nor cotton, nor the sugar-cane. Bread, meat, and clothing are the main productions of both. But, although the great productions are mainly the same, there are many diversities of condition and circumstances, and various modes of culture.

The primary elements which enter into the consideration of the agriculture of a country are four,—climate, soil, price of land, and price of labor. In any comparison, therefore, of the agriculture of England with that of Massachusetts, these elements are to be taken particularly into view.

The climate of England differs essentially from that of this country. England is on the western side of the eastern, and we on the eastern side of the western continent. The climate of all countries is materially affected by their respective situations in relation to the ocean. The winds which prevail most, both in this country and in England, are from the west. It is known that the wind blows, in our latitude, from some point west to some point east, on an average of years, nearly or quite three days out of four. These facts are familiar. The consequences resulting from them are, that our winters are colder and our summers much hotter than in England. Our latitude is about that of Oporto, yet the temperature is very different. On these accounts, therefore, the maturing of the crops in England, and the power of using these crops, creates a material difference between its agriculture and ours. It may be supposed that our climate must resemble that of China in the same latitudes; and this fact may have an essential bearing upon that branch of agriculture which it is proposed to introduce among us, the production of silk.

The second point of difference between the two countries lies in the soil. The soil of England is mainly argillaceous, a soft and unctuous loam upon a substratum of clay. This may be considered as the predominant characteristic in the parts which I visited. The soil in some of the southern counties of England is thinner; some of it is what we should call stony; much of it is a free, gravelly soil, with some small part which, with us, would be called sandy. Through a great extent of country, this soil rests on a deep bed of chalk. Ours is a granite soil. There is granite in Great Britain; but this species of soil prevails in Scotland, a part of the country which more resembles our own. We may have some lands as good as any in England. Our alluvial soils on Connecticut River, and in some other parts of the country, are equal to any lands; but these have not, ordinarily, a wide extent of clay subsoil. The soil of Massachusetts is harder, more granitic, less abounding in clay, and altogether more stony, than the soil of England. The surface of Massachusetts is more uneven, more broken with mountain ridges, more diversified with hill and dale, and more abundant in streams of water, than that of England.

The price of land in that country, another important element in agricultural calculations, differs greatly from the price of land with us. It is three times as high as in Massachusetts, at least.

On the other hand, the price of agricultural labor is much higher in Massachusetts than in England. The price of labor varies considerably in different parts of England; but it may be set down as twice as dear with us here.

These are the general remarks which have suggested themselves to me in regard to the state of things abroad. Now, have we any thing to learn from them? Is there any thing in the condition of England applicable to us, or in regard to which the agriculture of England may be of use to Massachusetts and other countries?

The subject of agriculture, in England, has strongly attracted the attention and inquiries of men of science. They have studied particularly the nature of the soil. More than twenty years ago, Sir Humphrey Davy undertook to treat the subject of the application of chemical knowledge to agriculture in the analysis of soils and manures. The same attention has been continued to the subject; and the extraordinary discoveries and advances

in chemical science, since his time, are likely to operate greatly to the advantage of agriculture. The best results may be expected from them. These inquiries are now prosecuted in France with great enthusiasm and success. We may hope for like beneficial results here from the application of science to the same objects.

But although the circumstances of climate and situation, and nature of the soil, form permanent distinctions which cannot be changed, yet there are other differences, resulting from different modes of culture, and different forms of applying labor; and it is to these differences that our attention should be particularly directed. Here, there is much to learn. English cultivation is more scientific, more systematic, and more exact, a great deal, than ours. This is partly the result of necessity. A vast population is to be supported on comparatively a small surface. Lands are dear, rents are high, and hands, as well as mouths, are numerous. Careful and skilful cultivation is the natural result of this state of things. An English farmer looks not merely to the present year's crop. He considers what will be the condition of the land when that crop is off; and what it will be fit for the next year. He studies to use his land so as not to abuse it. On the contrary, his aim is to get crop after crop, while still the land shall be growing better and better. If he should content himself with raising from the soil a large crop this year, and then leave it neglected and exhausted, he would starve. It is upon this fundamental idea of constant production without exhaustion, that the system of English cultivation, and, indeed, of all good cultivation, is founded. England is not original in this. Flanders, and perhaps Italy, have been her teachers. This system is carried out in practice by a well-considered rotation of crops. The form or manner of this rotation, in a given case, is determined very much by the value of the soil, and partly by the local demand for particular products. But some rotation, some succession, some variation in the annual productions of the same land, is essential. No tenant could obtain a lease, or, if he should, could pay his rent and maintain his family, who should wholly disregard this. White crops (wheat, barley, rye, oats, &c.) are not to follow one another. Our maize, or Indian corn, must be considered a white crop; although, from the quantity of stalk and leaf which it produces, and which are such excellent food for cattle, it is less exhausting than some other

white crops; or, to speak more properly, it makes greater returns to the land. The cultivation of maize has not, however, been carried to any extent in England. Green crops are turnips, potatoes, beets, vetches, or tares (which are usually eaten while growing, by cattle and sheep, or cut for green food), and clover. Buck or beech wheat, and winter oats, — thought to be a very useful product, — are regarded also as green crops, when eaten on the land; and so, indeed, may any crop be considered, which is used in this way. But the turnip is the great green crop of England. Its cultivation has wrought such changes, in fifty years, that it may be said to have revolutionized English agriculture.

Before that time, when lands became exhausted by the repetition of grain crops, they were left, as it was termed, fallow; that is, were not cultivated at all, but left to recruit themselves as they might. This occurred as often as every fourth year, so that one quarter of the arable land was always out of cultivation, and yielded nothing. Turnips are now substituted in the place of these naked fallows; and now land in turnips is considered as fallow. What is the philosophy of this? The raising of crops, even of any, the most favorable crop, does not, in itself, enrich, but in some degree exhausts, the land. The exhaustion of the land, however, as experience and observation have fully demonstrated, takes place mainly when the seeds of a plant are allowed to perfect themselves. The turnip is a biennial plant. It does not perfect its seed before it is consumed.

There is another circumstance in respect to the turnip plant which deserves consideration. Plants, it is well understood, derive a large portion of their nutriment from the air. The leaves of plants are their lungs. The leaves of turnips expose a wide surface to the atmosphere, and derive, therefore, much of their subsistence and nutriment from these sources. The broad leaves of the turnips likewise shade the ground, preserve its moisture, and prevent, in some measure, its exhaustion by the sun and air.

The turnips have a further and ultimate use. Meat and clothing come from animals. The more animals are sustained upon a farm, the more meat and the more clothing. These things bear, of course, a proportion to the number of bullocks, sheep, swine, and poultry which are maintained. The great inquiry,

then, is, What kind of crops will least exhaust the land in their cultivation, and furnish, at the same time, support to the largest number of animals ?

A very large amount of land, in England, is cultivated in turnips. Fields of turnips of three, four, and even five hundred acres, are sometimes seen, though the common fields are much less ; and it may be observed here, that, in the richest and best cultivated parts of England, inclosures of ten, fifteen, twenty, or thirty acres seemed more common. Since the introduction of the turnip culture, bullocks and sheep have trebled in number. Turnips, for the reasons given, are not great exhausters of the soil ; and they furnish abundant food for animals. Let us suppose that one bushel of oats or barley may be raised at the same cost as ten bushels of turnips, and will go as far in support of stock. The great difference in the two crops is to be found in the farmer's barn-yard. Here is the test of their comparative value. This is the secret of the great advantages which follow from their cultivation. The value of manure in agriculture is well appreciated. M^Queen states the extraordinary fact, that the value of the animal manure annually applied to the crops in England, at current prices, surpasses in value the whole amount of its foreign commerce. There is no doubt that it greatly exceeds it. The turnip crop returns a vast amount of nutritive matter to the soil. The farmer, then, from his green crops, and by a regular system of rotation, finds green fodder for his cattle and wheat for the market.

Among the lighter English soils is that of the county of Norfolk, a county, however, which I had not the pleasure of visiting. Its soil, I understand, is light, a little inclined to sand, or light loam. Such soils are not unfavorable to roots. Here is the place of the remarkable cultivation and distinguished improvements of that eminent cultivator, Mr. Coke, now Earl of Leicester. In these lands, as I was told, a common rotation is turnips, barley, clover, wheat. These lands resemble much of the land in our county of Plymouth, and the sandy lands to be found in the vicinity of the Connecticut and Merrimack Rivers. The cultivation of green crops in New England deserves attention. There is no incapacity in our soil, and there are no circumstances unfavorable to their production. What would be the best kind of succulent vegetables to be cultivated, whether tur-

nips or carrots, I am not prepared to say. But no attempts, within my knowledge, have been made among us of a systematic agriculture; and until we enter upon some regular rotation of crops, and our husbandry becomes more systematic, no distinguished success can be looked for. As to our soil, as has been remarked, there is no inherent incapacity for the production of any of the common crops. We can raise wheat in Massachusetts. The average crop in England is twenty-six bushels to the acre. From my own farm, where the soil is comparatively thin and poor, I have obtained this summer seventy-six bushels of wheat upon three acres of land. It is not, therefore, any want of capability in the soil; but the improvement and success of our husbandry must depend upon a succession of crops adapted to the circumstances of our soil, climate, and peculiar condition.

In England, a large portion of the turnip crop is consumed on the land where it grows. The sheep are fed out of doors all winter; and I saw many large flocks, in the aggregate thousands and even millions of sheep, which were never housed. This was matter of surprise, especially considering the wetness of the climate; and these sheep are often exposed in fields where a dry spot cannot be found for them to lie down upon. Sheep are often folded in England by wattled fences, or hurdles temporarily erected in different parts of the field, and removed from place to place, as the portions of the crop thus fenced off are consumed. In some cases they are folded, and the turnips dug and carried to them. In such cases, they are always fed upon lands which are intended the next year to be, as far as practicable, brought under cultivation. I have seen many laborers in fields, employed in drawing the turnips, splitting them, and scattering them over the land, for the use of the sheep, which is considered better, often, than to leave the sheep to dig for themselves. These laborers are so employed all winter, and if the ground should become frozen, the turnips are taken up with a bar. Together with the turnips, it is thought important that sheep should have a small quantity of other food. Chopped hay, sometimes a little oil-cake, or oats, is usually given. This is called *trough* food, as it is eaten in troughs, standing about in the field. In so moist a climate as that of England, some land is so wet that, in the farmer's

phrase, it will not *carry sheep*; that is, it is quite too wet for sheep to lie out upon it. In such cases, the turnips must be *carried*, that is, removed from the field, and fed out elsewhere. The last season was uncommonly wet, and for that reason, perhaps, I could not so well judge; but it appeared to me that it would be an improvement in English husbandry, to furnish for sheep, oftener than is done, not only a tolerably dry ground to lie on, but some sort of shelter against the cold rains of winter. The turnips, doubtless, are more completely consumed, when dug, split, and fed out. The Swedish turnip, I have little doubt, is best suited to cold climates. It is scarcely injured by being frozen in the ground in the winter, as it will thaw again, and be still good, in spring. In Scotland, in the Lothians, where cultivation is equal to that in any part of England, it is more the practice than farther south to house turnips, or draw them, and cover them from frost. I have been greatly pleased with Scotch farming, and as the climate and soil of Scotland more resemble the soil and climate of Massachusetts than those of England do, I hope the farmers of Massachusetts will acquaint themselves, as well as they can, with Scotch husbandry. I had the pleasure of passing some time in Scotland, with persons engaged in these pursuits, and acknowledge myself much instructed by what I learned from them, and saw in their company. The great extent of the use of turnips and other green crops in Scotland is evidence that such crops cannot be altogether unsuited to Massachusetts.

Among the subjects which of late years have engaged much of the attention of agriculturists in England, few are more important than that of tile draining. This most efficient and successful mode of draining is getting into very extensive use. Much of the soil of England, as I have already stated, rests on a clayey and retentive subsoil. Excessive wetness is prejudicial and destructive to the crops. Marginal drains, or drains on the outside of the fields, do not produce the desired results. These tile-drains have effected most important improvements. The tile itself is made of clay, baked like bricks; it is about one foot in length, four inches in width, three fourths of an inch in thickness, and it stands from six to eight inches in height, being hemispherical, or like the half of a cylinder, with its sides elongated. It somewhat resembles the Dutch tiles which are seen

on the roofs of the old houses in Albany and New York. A ditch is sunk, eighteen or twenty inches in depth, and these drains are multiplied over a field, sometimes at a distance of only seven yards apart. The ditch or drain being dug, these tiles are laid down, with the hollow side at bottom, on the smooth clay, or any other firm subsoil, the sides placed near to each other, some little straw thrown over the joints to prevent the admission of dirt, and the whole covered up. This is not so expensive a mode of draining as might be supposed. The ditch or drain need only be narrow, and tiles are of much cheaper transportation than stone would be. But the result is so important as well to justify the expense. It is estimated that this thorough draining adds often twenty per cent. to the production of the wheat crop. A beautiful example came under my observation in Nottinghamshire, not long before I left England. A gentleman was showing me his grounds for next year's crop of wheat. On one side of the lane, where the land had been drained, the wheat was already up and growing luxuriantly; on the other, where the land was subject to no other disadvantage than that it had not been drained, it was still too wet to be sowed at all. It may be thought singular enough, but it is doubtless true, that, on stiff, clayey lands, thorough draining is as useful in dry, hot summers as in cold and wet summers; for such land, if a wet winter or spring be suddenly followed by hot and dry weather, is apt to become hard and baked, so that the roots of plants cannot enter it. Thorough draining, by giving an opportunity to the water on the surface to be constantly escaping, corrects this evil. Draining can never be needed to so great an extent in Massachusetts as in England and Scotland, from the different nature of the soil; but we have yet quantities of low meadow lands, producing wild, harsh, sour grasses, or producing nothing, which, there is little doubt, might be rendered most profitable hay-fields, by being well drained. When we understand better the importance of concentrating labor, instead of scattering it, — when we shall come to estimate duly the superior profit of "a little farm, well tilled," over a great farm, half cultivated and half manured, overrun with weeds, and scourged with exhausting crops, — we shall then fill our barns, and double the winter fodder for our cattle and sheep by the products of these waste meadows.

There is in England another mode of improvement, most important, instances of which I have seen, and one of which I regard as the most beautiful agricultural improvement which has ever come under my observation. I mean irrigation, or the making of what are called *water meadows*. I first saw them in Wiltshire, and was much struck with them, not having before understood, from reading or conversation, exactly what they were. But I afterwards had an opportunity of examining a most signal and successful example of this mode of improvement, on the estates of the Duke of Portland, in the North of England, on the borders of Sherwood forest. Indeed, it was part of the old forest known by that name. Sherwood forest, at least in its present state, is not like the pine forests of Maine, the heavy, hard wood forests of the unredeemed lands of New Hampshire and Vermont, or the still heavier timbered lands of the West. It embraces a large extent of country, with various soils, some of them thin and light, with beautiful and venerable oaks, of unknown age, much open ground between them and underneath their wide-spread branches, and this covered with heather, lichens, and fern. Sherwood forest, indeed, is not less interesting for the natural beauty which charms the eye, than for its venerable antiquity and historical associations. But in many parts the soil is far enough from being rich. Upon the borders of this forest are the water meadows of which I am speaking. A little river runs through the forest in this part, at the bottom of a valley with sides moderately sloping, and of considerable extent, between the river at the bottom and the common level of the surrounding country above. This little river, before reaching the place, runs through a small town, and gathers, doubtless, some refuse matter in its course. From this river, the water is taken at the upper end of the valley, conducted along the edge, or bank, in a canal or carrier, and from this carrier, at proper times, suffered to flow out very gently, spreading over and irrigating the whole surface, trickling and shining, when I saw it, (and it was then November,) among the light-green of the new-springing grass, and collected below in another canal, from which it is again let out, to flow in like manner over land lying still farther down towards the bottom of the valley. Ten years ago, this land, for production, was worth little or nothing. I was told that some of it

had been let, for no more than a shilling an acre. It has not been manured, and yet is now most extensively productive. It is not flooded; the water does not stand upon it; it flows gently over, and is applied several times in a year to each part, say in March, May, July, and October. In November, when I saw it, the farmers were taking off the third crop of hay cut this season, and that crop was certainly not less than two tons to the acre. This last crop is mostly used as green food for cattle. When I speak of the number of tons, I mean tons of dried hay. After this crop was off, sheep were to be put on it, to have lambs at Christmas, so as to come into market in March, a time of year when they command a high price. Upon taking off the sheep in March, the land would be watered. The process of watering lasts two or three days, or perhaps eight or ten days, according to circumstances, and is repeated after the taking off of each successive crop. Although this water has no doubt considerable sediment in it, yet the general fact shows how important water itself is to the growth of plants, and how far, even, it may supply the place of other sources of sustenance. Now we in Massachusetts have a more uneven surface, more valleys with sloping sides, by many times more streams, and such a climate that our farms suffer much oftener from drought than farms in England. May we not learn something useful, therefore, from such examples of irrigation in that country?

With respect to implements of husbandry, I am of opinion that the English, upon the whole, have no advantage over us. Their wagons and carts are no better; their ploughs, I thought, not better anywhere, and in some counties far inferior, because unnecessarily heavy. The subsoil plough, for which we have little use, is esteemed a useful invention, and the mole plough, which I have seen in operation, and the use of which is to make an underground drain, without disturbing the surface, is an ingenious contrivance, likely to be useful in clay soils, free from stone and gravel, but which can be little used in Massachusetts. In general, the English utensils of husbandry seemed to me unnecessarily cumbrous and heavy. The ploughs, especially, require a great strength of draught. But as drill husbandry is extensively practised in England, and very little with us, the various implements, or machines, for drill-sowing in that country quite surpass all we have. I do not re-

member to have seen the horse-rake used in England, although I saw in operation implements for spreading hay from the swath to dry, or rather, perhaps, for turning it, drawn by horses.

There are other matters connected with English agriculture, upon which I might say a word or two. Crops are cultivated in England, of which we know little. The common English field bean, a small brown bean, growing not on a clinging vine, like some varieties of the taller bean, runs in what is called with us the bush form, like our common white bean, upon a slight, upright stalk, two or two and a half feet high, and producing from twenty to forty bushels to the acre. It is valuable as food for animals, especially for horses. This bean does not grow well in thin soils, or what is called a hot bottom. A strong, stiff, clayey land, well manured, suits it best. Vetches, or tares, a sort of pea, are very much cultivated in England, although almost unknown here, and are there either eaten green, by sheep, on the land, or cut and carried for green food.

The raising of sheep in England is an immense interest. England probably clips fifty millions of fleeces this year, lambs under a year old not being shorn. The average yield may be six or seven pounds to a fleece. There are two principal classes of sheep in England, the long-wooled and the short-wooled. Among these are many varieties, but this is the general division or classification. The Leicester and the South Down belong, respectively, to these several families. The common clip of the former may be estimated from seven to eight pounds; and of the last, from three to three and a half, or four. I mention these particulars only as estimates; and much more accurate information may doubtless be obtained from many writers. In New England, we are just beginning to estimate rightly the importance of raising sheep. England has seen it much earlier, and is pursuing it with far more zeal and perseverance. Our climate, as already observed, differs from that of England; but the great inquiry, applicable in equal force to both countries, is, How can we manage our land in order to produce the largest crops, while, at the same time, we keep up the condition of the land, and place it, if possible, in a course of gradual improvement? The success of farming must depend, in a considerable degree, upon the animals produced and supported on

the farm. The farmer may calculate, in respect to animals, upon two grounds of profit, the natural growth of the animal, and the weight obtained by fattening. The skilful farmer, therefore, expects, where he gains one pound in the fattening of his animal, to gain an equal amount in the growth. The early maturity of stock is consequently a point of much importance.

Oxen are rarely reared in England for the yoke. In Devonshire and Cornwall, ox teams are employed; but in travelling one thousand miles in England, I saw only one ox team, and in that case they were driven one before the other, and in harnesses similar to those of horses. Bullocks are raised for the market. It is highly desirable, therefore, both in respect to neat cattle and sheep, that their growth should be rapid, and their fattening properties favorable, that they may be early disposed of, and the expense of production proportionably lessened.

Is it practicable, on the soil and in the climate of Massachusetts, to pursue a succession of crops? I cannot question it; and I have entire confidence in the improvements to our husbandry, and the other great advantages, which would accrue from judicious rotation of products. The capacities of the soil of Massachusetts are undoubted. One hundred bushels of corn to an acre have been repeatedly produced, and other crops in like abundance. But this will not effect the proper ends of a judicious and profitable agriculture, unless we can so manage our husbandry that, by a judicious and proper succession of the crops, land will not only be restored after an exhausting crop, but gradually enriched by cultivation. It is of the highest importance that our farmers should increase their power of sustaining live stock, that they may obtain in that way the means of improving their farms.

The breed of cattle in England is greatly improved, and still improving. I have seen some of the best stocks, and many individual animals from others, and think them admirable. The short-horned cattle brought to this country are often very good specimens. I have seen the flocks from which some of them have been selected, and they are certainly among the best in England. But in every selection of stock, we are to regard our own climate, and our own circumstances. We raise oxen for work, as well as for beef; and I am of opinion that the Devonshire stock furnishes excellent animals for our use.

We have suffered that old stock, brought hither by our ancestors, to run down, and be deteriorated. It has been kept up and greatly improved in England, and we may now usefully import from it. The Devonshire ox is a hardy animal, of size and make suited to the plough, and though certainly not the largest for beef, yet generally very well fattened. I think quite well, also, of the Ayrshire cows. They are good milkers, and, being a hardy race, are on that account well suited to a cold climate, and to the coarse and sometimes scanty pasturage of New England. After all, I think there can be no doubt that the improved breed of short horns are the finest cattle in the world, and should be preferred wherever plenty of good fodder and some mildness of climate invite them. They are well fitted to the Western States, where there is an overflowing abundance, both of winter and summer fodder, and where, as in England, bullocks are raised for beef only. I have no doubt, also, that they might be advantageously raised in the rich valleys of the Connecticut, and perhaps in some other favored parts of the State. But for myself, as a farmer on the thin lands of Plymouth County, and on the bleak shores of the sea, I do not feel that I could give to animals of this breed that entertainment which their merit deserves.

As to sheep, the Leicesters are like the short-horned cattle. They must be kept well; they should always be fat; and, pressed by good keeping to early maturity, they are found very profitable. "Feed well," was the maxim of the great Roman farmer, Cato; and that short sentence comprises much of all that belongs to the profitable economy of live stock. The South Downs are a good breed, both for wool and mutton. They crop the grass that grows on the thin soils, over beds of chalk, in Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Dorsetshire. They ought not to scorn the pastures of New England.

When we turn our thoughts to the condition of England, we must perceive of what immense importance is every, even the smallest, degree of improvement in its agricultural productions. Suppose that, by some new discovery, or some improved mode of culture, only one per cent. could be added to the annual results of English cultivation; this, of itself, would materially affect the comfortable subsistence of millions of human beings. It is often said that England is a garden. This

is a strong metaphor. There is poor land and some poor cultivation in England. All people are not equally industrious, careful, and skilful. But, on the whole, England is a prodigy of agricultural wealth. Flanders may possibly surpass it. I have not seen Flanders; but England quite surpasses, in this respect, whatever I have seen. In associations for the improvement of agriculture we have been earlier than England. But such associations now exist there. I had the pleasure of attending the first meeting of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, and I found it a very pleasant and interesting occasion. Persons of the highest distinction for rank, talents, and wealth were present, all zealously engaged in efforts for the promotion of the agricultural interest. No man in England is so high as to be independent of the success of this great interest; no man so low as not to be affected by its prosperity or its decline. The same is true, eminently and emphatically true, with us. Agriculture feeds us; to a great degree it clothes us; without it we could not have manufactures, and we should not have commerce. These all stand together, but they stand together like pillars in a cluster, the largest in the centre, and that largest is agriculture. Let us remember, too, that we live in a country of small farms and freehold tenements; a country in which men cultivate with their own hands their own fee-simple acres, drawing not only their subsistence, but also their spirit of independence and manly freedom, from the ground they plough. They are at once its owners, its cultivators, and its defenders. And, whatever else may be undervalued or overlooked, let us never forget that the cultivation of the earth is the most important labor of man. Man may be civilized, in some degree, without great progress in manufactures and with little commerce with his distant neighbors. But without the cultivation of the earth, he is, in all countries, a savage. Until he gives up the chase, and fixes himself in some place and seeks a living from the earth, he is a roaming barbarian. When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of human civilization.

